



79.2

GLIMPSES  
OF THE  
MONASTERY.









VENERABLE MOTHER MARY OF THE INCARNATION,  
Foundress and first Superior of the Ursuline Convent of Quebec (1639).

(From a painting by BOTTONI, Rome, 1878.)

GLIMPSES OF THE MONASTERY

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SCENES FROM THE HISTORY

OF THE

URSULINES OF QUEBEC

DURING

TWO HUNDRED YEARS

1639 - 1839

BY A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY

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SECOND EDITION

REVISED, AUGMENTED AND COMPLETED BY

REMINISCENCES OF THE LAST FIFTY YEARS; 1839-1889

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A. M. D. G.

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REVISTA OLIVIA  
ADAMAS 70

**J. M. J.**

ANGELA

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TO OUR DEAR MOTHER  
**VENERABLE MARIE GUYART OF THE INCARNATION**

FIRST SUPERIOR

AND WITH

**MADAME DE LA PELTRIE**  
JOINT-FOUNDRRESS OF THE MONASTERY

THIS LITTLE SKETCH OF ITS HISTORY

IS MOST HUMBLY AND

AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED.





## PREFACE

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Some twenty years ago the pages of the "Glimpses of the Monastery" were written to supply a want which had long been felt; namely, that of possessing in English, and within a small compass, an account of the chief events that have marked the history of the Convent since its foundation.

The object of the work suggested the plan. It was not to be a dry compendium of facts and dates. It should represent the character and spirit of the institution of which it treats, by presenting before the reader the varying vicissitudes through which it has passed from the first hazardous undertaking of its foundation to the present day. It should introduce us not only to those "valiant women" who shared the courage and long suffering of the holy priests and missionaries of the "heroic age" of Canada, but it should acquaint us also with some of those facts and incidents which occur to vary the uniformity of convent life, presenting us even the more intimate pictures of the lives of the nuns.

Such was the plan of the work which, however, had

to be accomplished without the leisure that would have been desirable, and without foregoing either the duties of the class-room or the stated religious exercises of the community.

But it was intended for a class of readers on whose unlimited indulgence we could depend. The little book treating of the Convent would be read by the friends and relatives of the nuns, by their pupils of present or former times, by persons young or old who love to meet in their reading the dear name of God and His Saints ; by strangers even who know little of monastic life, and whose curiosity we are willing to gratify by showing them something of that little world which openly professes to be " unlike the world ".

The chief documents and reliable writings which have preserved the early history of the monastery, are :

I. The Relations of the Jesuits, published in France from 1632 to 1672. As reprinted by the Canadian government in 1868, they form three large octavo volumes.

II. The life and Letters of Venerable Mother Marie Guyard de l'Incarnation, first Superior of the Monastery, who died in 1672. During the space of some thirty years this admirable woman entertained, in the interests of religion and the good of souls, a vast correspondence with persons of various rank and condition in France, and especially with her son who became a Benedictine monk, and who after his mother's death, published a selection of her letters.

III. For events of later years, for the lives of the nuns, etc., we have the annals of the monastery, the obituary notices of the nuns, often supplemented by reliable traditions, by letters, etc.

The favorable reception that awaited the "Glimpses of the Monastery" on its first appearance leads us to expect it will obtain a wider circulation in its improved form.

The history of Canada has become better known in the neighboring Republic within a few years past, and neither our English nor our American friends are indifferent to the reputation of our educational institutions. They are interested to find that while the country was yet in its infancy, a feeble colony struggling for existence, the sacred fire, destined to enlighten the intelligences of future generations was carefully maintained in the religious institutions already founded.

On the other hand, we have been most fortunate in being permitted to submit the work, both the "Glimpses of the Monastery" and the "Reminiscences", to the enlightened and judicious criticism of a Reverend friend, whose qualifications in all that relates to literature are only equalled by his exquisite delicacy and readiness to oblige.

Ursuline Convent, Québec, November 21st, 1897.



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# GLIMPSES OF THE MONASTERY

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## BOOK I

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### THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

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#### CHAPTER I

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##### FROM THE PRESENT TO THE PAST

##### INTRODUCTORY

Among the many tourists who, during the course of the summer season, stroll through the winding streets of the old city of Quebec, so unlike any other city on the American continent, not a few, with guide-book in hand, pause before the gate-way and grass-plot which front the entrance to the Ursuline Convent. Comparing the aspect of the buildings before them with the picture they have formed of it in their mind, they hesitate to recognize that time-honored Institution, dating from 1639, which is said to cover a large space in the centre of the city. The disappointed traveller will perhaps seek another point of view, and should he gain access to one of the fine dwellings to the right hand, on St. Louis street, or to the stately residences on St. Ann's, he will perceive that the

whole square formed by these streets, constitutes the cloistered ground from which his footsteps are debarred.

The guide-book can take him no further. Therefore we here offer a brief account of the foundation of the Convent, its chief vicissitudes during two hundred and fifty years, with some notice of the lives and labors of the nuns who have succeeded each other here during that space of time. These, and other kindred topics will not fail to interest the intelligent tourist, whether he hail from Albion's famous isle, or from the nearer land where waves the Star-spangled Banner.

Other readers, besides the traveller, will be attracted by these records of the past which, to many, will be as new and strange as tales from an unknown land.

#### INSTRUCTION NEEDED IN NEW FRANCE

A glance at the history of Canada, at the period of the foundation of the monastery, 1639, will show the opportuneness of the undertaking and its urgency for the prosperity of the colony.

Thirty years had elapsed since the attempt had been made to fix a permanent settlement upon the shores of the St. Lawrence. With no other neighbors for thousand of miles than savage hordes, the little Colony founded in 1608 would have been, for twenty years, merely a central post for the fur-traders, had it not been, above all, a refuge and a rallying point for the missions.

The illustrious founder of Quebec had mainly in view, "to plant, in this country, the standard of the Cross, to teach the knowledge of God and the Glory of His Name, desiring to increase charity for His creatures." Hence, while providing for the spiritual welfare of his own people, he had not failed

to invite missionaries to come and labor for the conversion of the pagan Indians.

The call was accepted by the sons of St. Francis, as early as 1615. Ten years later, came the Jesuit missionaries, to share the labors, the perils, and the merits of the Recollets.

In 1629, the little Fort of Quebec was beleaguered, at once, by famine and by a hostile fleet. It was not a Strasbourg, surrendering with its army 300,000 strong. It was simply the capture of about fifty people, but it annihilated, at one blow, the fruit of twenty years' labor and hardships, depriving the French monarch of his only foothold on the American continent, and plunging the poor Indian anew into the pagan darkness from which he was beginning to emerge.

Fortunately, the fleet, which three years later brought back the *fleur de lis*, bore a more numerous colony than had been carried away. It restored also the missionary to his glorious toils.

The new colonists were not mere traders. They came provided with implements of agriculture; a few had brought their families to make this distant shore their home. The powerful Company of the Hundred Associates, moreover, was pledged to increase the number of immigrants to four thousand before the end of ten years.

Such was the prospect the noble and devoted Champlain was given to contemplate, before closing his eyes upon the scenes of his long and arduous labors. His death, on Christmas day, 1635, filled with mourning his own countrymen, wherever they were scattered throughout the land. The Indians also, wept the kind hearted governor whom they regarded with reverence and affection.

Another year brought, as governor of New France, the gallant de Montmagny, who continued the plans of his illustrious predecessor. In his company, besides his officers and

soldiers, were two noble families, Le Gardeur de Repentigny and Le Neuf, comprising forty-five persons, with artisans and laborers, giving to the infant city a population of nearly two hundred souls.

The fort was now enlarged, and partly built of stone; the streets of the city were traced. The Jesuit mission-house having received reinforcements, a residence was established also at Three Rivers, where already the fur-traders had their post, frequented by the Indian hunters. Another mission-house was built in the distant country of the Hurons, and there, in the midst of persecutors, was a little band of faithful converts. The wandering Algonquin and Montagnais<sup>1</sup>, more docile than the Hurons, wherever they had met the missionary, had received with joy the tidings of salvation.

New interest in the success of the missions and the welfare of the colonists was awakened in France by the publication of the *Relations*, in which the holy missionaries made known the wonderful effects of grace in these new Christians, as well as the ardor of their own longings to shed their blood for the cause of God.

Princes and prelates, courtiers and ladies, as well as persons in the humbler walks of life, vied with each other, in raising funds for the missions and other charitable purposes. One of these pious donations provided for the establishment of the converted Algonquins and Montagnais, on the model of the

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1.—North of the St. Lawrence wandered various tribes of the Algonquin type: the Montagnais, the Algonquins and the Nipissings. Maine was occupied by the Abenakis; Gaspé and New Brunswick, by the Micmacs. The Hurons inhabited the peninsula formed by Lake Huron, the river Severn, and Lake Simcoe.

All these tribes were gained to the faith within the lifetime of the first missionaries.

The Iroquois occupied the centre of New York.





URSULINE CONVENT OF TOURS, FRANCE.

Reductions of Paraguay. Thus was commenced, in 1637<sup>1</sup>, the Christian village of Sillery.

There, at only four miles' distance from Quebec, were little Indian girls waiting to be instructed. Other little French maidens were growing up among the settlers, within and around the city. It is easy to imagine with what anxiety pious fathers and mothers looked upon their daughters, for whom it was impossible to procure the advantages of education and instruction. For their sons, these precious advantages were to be found in the college of the Jesuits, opened in 1635.

Had Divine Providence, while providing for the bird unfledged, rocking in its little nest, forgotten the birdlings of a Christian home? If left without intellectual and moral culture, would not the descendants of European civilization sink to the level of the degraded beings around them, and become perhaps more savage than the natives themselves?

But Providence had not forgotten the little ones in New France, as we shall soon see. •

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## CHAPTER II

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### THE WAYS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Far from these vast regions where the fearless missionaries labored, away in central France, the old city of Tours lay quivering in the sunlight of an April morning. It is not

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1—By Noël Brûlart de Sillery, Prime Minister of Louis XIII.



to the bright fields, the vine-clad hills, the pleasant thickets of mulberry-trees, that we shall direct our gaze ; but to the cloistered garden-walks of the Ursuline Monastery, along which one of the sisterhood glides, with joyous step, hastening to visit a favorite shrine, " the Hermitage of St. Joseph ! " In this sacred spot we might recognize one whose name is now familiar to thousands on both sides of the Atlantic. It was Mother Mary of the Incarnation, for whom St. Joseph had procured an immense favor. An interior assurance had been granted her that the moment for the accomplishment of the will of God in her regard was at hand. The long years of waiting are nearly over ; the " precious crosses of Canada," which will soon be hers, promise her " the delights of Paradise," because there she will have an opportunity of winning souls to God.

Perhaps there are none of our readers who have not heard something of the history of this remarkable woman—the foundress of the first institution for the instruction of female youth on our continent ; the first, also, whose name, from this Northern America, has been carried to Rome, to be inscribed as a candidate for the highest honors which the Church can bestow upon her most faithful children.

Born in 1599, of a family, not wealthy, but distinguished for probity and virtue, Marie Guyart had the advantage of a solid and pious education, and from her earliest years, her

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1—This garden-chapel, solidly built of stone, still exists, and has been visited of late years by travellers from Canada, among others by Mr. Ernest Gagnon, secretary of Public Works. To his kindness we are indebted for the interesting photographic views of the monastery of the Ursulines, the Hermitage, or chapel of St. Joseph and the paternal mansion in which our Venerable Mother Mary Guyart de l'Incarnation was born.

This monastery, from which the Ursulines of Tours were driven by the Revolution of 1793, is now a Catholic college.

soul was the recipient of heavenly favors. The piety and innocence of her youth, the trials that attended her during the two years of her married life, the admirable virtues she practised during her widowhood, while bringing up her infant son—the only tie that retained her in the world,—these would form the headings of as many chapters, replete with interest and edification.

At length, after devoting twelve years to the training and education of her son, she confided him to her sister's care, and entered the cloister. These years of probation had been to her the narrow, thorny path, leading to the mountain-heights of sanctity. She had practised the counsels of evangelical perfection before pronouncing the solemn vows as a religious. She had attained that sublime state, which St. Paul describes of himself: "Henceforth I live, yet not I, but Jesus Christ liveth in me."

The interests of God had become hers; the extension of the Kingdom of His Divine Son, her only and ardent desire. The conversion of the heathen, throughout the universe, was the continual object of her supplications.

Not long after her admission into the Community, one Christmas-tide (it was in 1631), her future course was mysteriously shadowed forth in a dream, which made a deep impression upon her mind. Through a dark and perilous way, she groped, hand in hand, with a lady whose countenance was unknown to her. A venerable personage directed the travellers by a motion of the hand, and they entered a spacious court, enclosed by the buildings of a monastery. The pavement was of white marble, intersected by lines of vermilion. Over all this place, seemed to brood the spirit of stillness and peace. On one side rose a chapel of purest alabaster, upon the summit of which, as upon a throne, was seated the Virgin with the Divine Infant. All around

extended a desolate country, covered with fogs and beset with mountains and precipices. In the midst of these gloomy wastes, the spire and gable-end of a little church could be perceived, just visible above the fogs. The Virgin looked with sadness on the dismal scene, and as Mary of the Incarnation, longing to be nearer, pressed forward close to her seat, the sweet Mother of Mercy turned towards her with a smile of welcome, and gently bending down, embraced her. Then she seemed to whisper some message to the Divine Infant, that concerned Mother Mary and the salvation of souls.

The words had not been heard, but, on awaking, she knew the purport of that secret message, and her heart, filled with ineffable consolation, burned more than ever for the conversion of pagan nations.

A year later, the same scene was represented to her, attended by an interior call to devote herself to found a monastery of her Order in Canada. Henceforth, while praying for all the benighted nations of the earth, it is in particular for the poor Indians of the New World that her zeal is enkindled. Many times each day, with pressing supplications she pleads for souls, through the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and still she seems to hear our Lord's bidding: "Go to Canada, and there, build a house to Jesus and Mary." There, the light of the Gospel was indeed just beginning to dispel the darkness which through long ages had covered the land.

About this time the *Relations* which the Jesuit missionaries in New France had begun to publish in 1632, found their way to the monastery, and helped to fan the flame.

How the Almighty had provided for the accomplishment of His designs, we must now relate.

In another distant part of France, near the little town of Alençon, in Normandy, stood the castle of the Seigneur of Vaubougon, the ancestral home of Madeleine de Chauvigny,

better known by the name of Madame de la Peltrie. Like Mother Mary of the Incarnation, Madeleine, engaged once in the married state through pure compliance with the will of her parents, constantly refused, when these ties were broken, to contract a second engagement. The piety of her early years had been remarkable. As a widow she proved her love of God by the practice of exterior works of charity, bestowing alms, lodging and serving the poor, visiting and comforting the sick and the unfortunate. To her also, the *Relations*, particularly that of 1635, brought a ray of light to direct her future course.

There she had read these moving words : " Alas ! were the superfluous wealth of some of the ladies of France employed to further the conversion of these poor Indians, what blessings would they not draw down upon their own families ! What a glorious thing it would be in the sight of Heaven to gather up the precious drops of the blood of Jesus and apply them to the souls of these poor heathens ! "

How many hearts that thrilled on reading this vehement appeal, turned as soon to some trivial pursuit, giving no further heed to the voice of grace ! Not so Madeleine. A high and noble purpose filled her soul, while it overwhelmed her with the impression of her own unworthiness.—Yes, she would go to that heathen land ; she would aid in gathering up the precious Blood of Jesus !

Before she had taken any step towards the accomplishment of her pious project, she fell dangerously ill, and soon her life was despaired of. In this extremity, she made a solemn vow to go to Canada, and to found, in honor of St. Joseph, a monastery of Ursulines for the instruction of the little Indian and French girls.

Suddenly she rose, from the brink of the grave, to perfect health !

Many difficulties remained to be overcome. Family interests were at stake, and family ties formed impediments. Legal proceedings having failed to procure her arrest, those who coveted the wealth she was giving to good works, were fully determined to deprive her of her liberty in order to obtain it. Through zeal for the missions of Canada, a gentleman of Caen, M. de Bernières, consented to aid Madame de la Peltrie in this difficult conjuncture, to protect her and forward the holy but hazardous enterprise <sup>1</sup>.

A journey to Paris enabled the pious lady to consult Father Condren, General of the Oratory, and St. Vincent of Paul. Both these eminent men approved of the noble undertaking and encouraged her to hope for success.

It remained to obtain *aunts* for the proposed foundation. Madame de la Peltrie sought the advice of Father Poncet, who was charged with the missions of Canada. From him, to her great joy, she learned the particulars of the vocation of Mother Mary of the Incarnation.

Not many weeks later, Madame de la Peltrie was at Tours, negotiating the affair with the archbishop. Admitted into the monastery, Mother Mary recognized, in the stranger, the companion with whom, in that mysterious dream, eight years before, she had toiled along a dangerous path, through an unknown, desert land.

It was necessary to choose a companion for Mother Mary; this was equally overruled by Providence. Not one in that fervent community would have shrunk from the proposed sacrifice; all were even anxious, to obtain the nomination.

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<sup>1</sup>—M. de Bernières remained the devoted friend of the Ursulines, taking charge of their affairs in France with a kindness worthy of the highest praise.

One alone, in her humility, judged herself unworthy to aspire to such a distinction : yet she was the chosen one. Of gentle mien and delicate health, the youthful and accomplished Marie de la Troche de St. Bernard, was of the noble blood of the de Savonnières. Her vocation to a religious life at the early age of fourteen, had already cost her parents an immense sacrifice. How was she to obtain either their consent, or that of her community ? When God wills, He provides the means of accomplishing His Holy will ; thus it proved in the case of Mlle de la Troche.

Attributing the unlooked-for success to the protection of St. Joseph, to whom she had confided all her hopes, Mother St. Bernard exchanged her name for that of Mother St. Joseph, by which she will be known in the following pages.

It remained to regulate the temporal affairs of the projected foundation, and to receive the Archbishop's blessing, with their " obediences," or episcopal authorization.

The assembly was held in the Archbishop's palace. The venerable Prelate, then eighty years of age, was profoundly moved. When the moment of parting came, he arose, and presenting the two religious to Madame de la Peltrie, addressed her in these remarkable words :

" Behold the two corner-stones of the temple you are about to erect in the New World to glorify the Almighty. I entrust them to you for this end, conformably to your request. May they be two precious gems in the foundation, like those in the heavenly Jerusalem. May this edifice be a mansion of peace, of grace, and heavenly blessings, more abundant than those of the ancient Temple of Solomon. May the efforts of hell never prevail against it, no more than against the Holy Church itself. And since this House is to be built for God, may He fix His dwelling there, as the Father and as the Spouse, not only of the nuns I confide to you, but of all

who may accompany them, or who will live there after them, to the end of time."

These solemn words, the farewell blessing, the last will and testament, as it were, of the aged prelate, are never read without emotion by the daughters of Mother Mary of the Incarnation, who would fain believe them to be a prophecy.

A last adieu to their dear monastery, to their beloved Mothers and Sisters, and their long journey commences.

In Paris they form an acquaintance with the Ursulines of the great city, who were destined later to lend them efficient aid.

The Queen, Anne of Austria, the Duchesses d'Aiguillon and de Brienne, as well as many other high-born ladies, manifested their interest in the future benefactresses of the poor Indians of Canada, bestowing gifts and pious donations to forward the good work.

At Dieppe, in another convent of Ursulines, the missionary spirit has been imparted to Mother Cécile Richer de la Croix, who seems, like another Matthew, to have risen at the first sound of the Divine Master's voice, ready to follow Him, even to the ends of the earth.

The merchant-ships, bound for Canada, had taken in their freight: dry goods, implements of labor, live-stock, seed, salt meat—a miscellaneous assortment—and were only waiting now for a favorable breeze. Among the expected passengers were three nuns<sup>1</sup> from the Hospital in Dieppe, who under the high patronage of the Duchess d'Aiguillon, were going to Quebec to found a house of their order. There were also the Jesuit Fathers, Vimont, Pinet, and Chau-

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1—Mother Marie Guenet de St. Ignace, Anne le Cointre de St. Bernard, and Marie Forestier de St. Bonaventure.

monot, for the missions ; and now, at the latest hour—an unexpected reinforcement—appeared Madame de la Peltrie and the three Ursulines.

On the 4th of May, all being in readiness and the wind favorable, our voyagers embarked. Three long months with no other horizon but the mingling sea and sky, no other landscape but the placid waters or the tossing billows ; such is their prospect, at best. Before they quit the Channel, they are rocked till all are sea-sick ; they barely escape being shipwrecked ; but that is nothing. " Their hearts are in peace, because they are fully abandoned to God."—Who would not wish them God-speed on their long and perilous voyage ?

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### CHAPTER III

1639

#### ARRIVAL OF THE URSULINES IN CANADA

It was mid-summer, when the little fleet which had lost sight of the coasts of France in May, anchored, at last, in the harbor of Tadoussac, at the confluence of the Saguenay with the St. Lawrence. Our travellers, no doubt, were struck with the stern and savage grandeur of the scenery : the black impending cliffs, rising perpendicularly, and forming a gigantic gate-way, through which the dark waters of the Saguenay issue—a fathomless flood—sublimely reminding the spectator of long ages past, and terrible convulsions of nature since her birth.

The dense, lonely forests were unbroken, save by the curl-



ing smoke of the wigwam-fire, or the rude sheds of the trading-station. Strange, too, and wild, were these swarthy hunters, the Algonquins and Montagnais, who had come, bringing their furs, the skin of the beaver, the seal and marten, to exchange for blankets, kettles, knives, and other European commodities.

The poor Indian looked with amazement on these "daughters of Sachems" who, he was told, had left their homes beyond the Great Sea, to teach the wives and daughters of the red man how to avoid the flames of another world.

Impatient to reach their destination, the passengers leave their ship, the *Admiral*, to its traffic, and in a smaller vessel press onwards towards Quebec. The natives, swift of foot, follow along the solitary shores, unwilling to lose sight of a spectacle so new and wonderful. The last day of July is near its close, when, turning the eastern point of the Isle of Orleans, the semicircle of the northern shore opens before them in all the loveliness of a summer sunset, varying its beauties from the abrupt promontory, the term of their voyage, to the low banks where the St. Charles brings in its tribute: the pleasant beach, adorned with woodland scenery, the little rustic village of Beauport, peeping through the trees, the precipitous ledge over which the Montmorency casts its sheet of foam.

Of all this, the slumbering river had a picture in its bosom. Our voyagers had another in their souls, a picture of all they fain would do and suffer for this Land of Promise.

It was decided not to enter the port of Quebec that night, and, a little bay<sup>1</sup> presenting itself on the pleasant wooded Island, they resolved to go on shore. How refreshing to the

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<sup>1</sup>—The Island of Orleans was, at that date, uninhabited. The little bay was, apparently, that now called *l'Anse du Fort*.

sea-faring voyagers is the cool, forest breeze, laden with sweet odors! How delightful this evening scene, where every feature is novel and grand! But of this our travellers take no note. They have only told us how they lodged in cabins, constructed by the sailors in Indian style. A wigwam was their hotel for that first night on shore, in the New World. Then with what joy their hearts were filled to see themselves under these "grand old forests" which they made resound with "hymns to God!"

During the evening, news of the bivouac on the point of the Island reached the fort of Quebec. At early dawn—it was the first of August—the booming cannon from the heights of Cape Diamond announced the arrival of this fresh body of recruits for the Colony. The Governor's yacht, sent out to honor the missionary band, was seen returning with flying colors.

While the strangers approach, let us with them view the scene.

Before us towers the bold promontory, crowned with military works. At the base of the cliffs, is a cluster of store-houses, sheds, and other wooden tenements, set down in the midst of fir-trees, sumachs, and aspens. Further on, the strand is studded with Indian encampments.

The first sound of the cannon has brought out the swarthy forms of the Huron traders. Some rush to the water's edge and launch their light canoes; others are grouped in various attitudes along the shore. Another flourish of military music, and the beach is thronged with all the population of the city.

The Governor, in plumed hat and scarlet, embroidered coat, leads the central group. It is the gallant Charles Huault de Montmagny, with his suite, all in brilliant uniform, his Lieutenant de Lisle, his secretary Piraube, his friends St. Jean de Repentigny, de Tilly, La Potherie, du Herisson,

Juchereau des Chatelets, the factor of the fur company. The Jesuit Fathers are there in their clerical costume. Gentlewomen mingle with the officials, and with the other groups of citizens. More numerous than all are the crowd of workmen, artisans, and clerks, who have leave to suspend their labors for the day, and who join the squad of soldiers in their noisy demonstrations, while perched on every rock along the mountain path, are other Indian braves, the villagers of Sillery.

The yacht has neared the shore. Our missionary nuns, on landing, fall prostrate, and kiss the soil of their adopted country, embracing, in their hearts, all the crosses it may bring forth.

The introductions over, the pious cortege moves on, climbing the zigzag pathway up the steep, now known as Mountain Hill.

At the top of the hill, to the left, is the little chapel of our Lady of Recovery <sup>1</sup>. There, the Holy Sacrifice is offered by the Father Superior of the missions; it is followed by the *Te Deum*. The emotions of this pious assembly, we shall not attempt to penetrate. They could only be fully known to Him, whose grace had inspired the heroic undertaking and whose love was the source of the sympathy it excited in these congenial souls.

The rites of hospitality reunited the *elite* of the company with the strangers, at the castle. We have no further details of this first day. All the French families had a right to an introduction. The nuns must have noticed the Héberts, the Couillards, the de Puiseaux; perhaps also, the Seigneur of Beauport <sup>2</sup>, Giffard.

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1—Notre-Dame de la Recouvrance, built By Champlain in 1632, in fulfilment of a vow he had made while retained in France.

2—M. Giffard had obtained the Seigniory of Beauport, and, in 1634, seven families had arrived there as tenants.

The next scene recorded in the old volumes which have guided us thus far, is a visit, on the day following, to the Indian hamlet of Sillery. The Ursulines and the Hospitaliers, conducted by Father Le Jeune, proceed first through the "Grande Allée," bordered in nearly all its length with fine old forest-trees. Birds of new song and plumage, flowers of unknown forms, but chiefly conversation on the prospects of the mission, diversified the way.

The hamlet was enclosed by a palisade, as a sort of fortification. The gateway, thrown open, discloses the life and manners of barbarism, just softened by a touch of civilization and purified by Christianity.

The Reduction consists of some fifteen families, their habitations varying from the primitive rudeness of the Algonquin wigwam to the substantial stone hut. A chapel, a mission-house for the priest, and an infirmary, or hospital, occupy the centre of the village.

At sight of the nuns clad in their peculiar costume, the poor squaws gather up their little papooses and seem ready to flee to the woods with them ; the older red-skinned urchins stop their wild play and huddle together ; but at a motion from the good priest whom they all know, they gather round and soon forget their sudden alarm. When told that these "daughters of Captains" had left their happy homes in France, to come and teach them more about the Blessed Jesus, or to serve them in their sickness, their wonder and admiration were unbounded. Not less profound was the joy, the affection with which the good nuns looked upon these children of the forest, whose spiritual welfare was henceforth to be the end of all their labors.

'Not a little Indian girl appeared, but *Ma lame de la Peltrie* pressed her to her bosom and kissed her with a mother's

fondness, unmindful of much that might have created disgust. The nuns were not less moved, and gathered round them with the aid of their good conductor, several of the little half-clothed children to be their future pupils. They next visit the chapel and hear the voices of the good Indians singing : " I believe in God, the Almighty Creator ; I believe in Jesus Christ our Lord. " Hymns too, in a language that seemed like the chattering and twittering of birds ; but the nuns knew they were singing of Jesus ; that was enough to move them to tears of devotion. Father Le Jeune announces that there is a neophyte to be baptized. Must not Madame de la Peltrie be the godmother ?

The visit over, the good Hospital Sisters and the Ursulines embraced each other for a final adieu. The two Orders had formed one community for the last three months, while the ship was their monastery and the Ocean their cloister. Now, their respective avocations require them to separate ; still living and laboring for the same end, the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

The Hospital Sisters find a comfortable dwelling-house in the Upper Town, near the Fort, to shelter them until their monastery, already commenced, will be ready to receive them.

As to the Ursulines, they have the loan of a small building on the wharf,<sup>1</sup> preferable, certainly, to an Indian wigwam in which, however, Mother Mary of the Incarnation declared, for her part, she was prepared to lodge.

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1—On the market-place, facing the Lower Town Church of N. D. des Victoires.

## CHAPTER IV

1639-1642

## THE LABOR OF THREE YEARS

The departure of the French fleet from the harbor of Quebec early in autumn, left the colonists to their seclusion, severing their last link with the mother country, for the next six or eight months. The Huron traders also had rolled up their bark houses and launched their light flotilla, leaving the strand to its wonted tranquillity.

Our Ursulines are already laboring "according to their institute," for the French pupils; at the same time they are tasking their energies to the utmost to acquire the Indian languages. They have an able and willing teacher in Father Le Jeune, who has become so learned only at the expense of hard labor and many months of forest-life with the savage hunters. The young seminarists, also, are efficient aids, one especially, who having lived near the trading-post of Three Rivers, has quite a vocabulary of French words which she can translate into Algonquin.

But our readers have not yet seen the interior of that little Convent, "*the Louvre*", as the nuns facetiously named it. This *palace* consists of two rooms, one sixteen feet square, the other of smaller dimensions, with a garret and a cellar. The arrangements need to be economical. The larger room serves as a dormitory, the beds being arranged along the wall in tiers; it is, at the same time, parlor, kitchen, refectory, recreation-room, and choir.

The smaller apartment is a class-room. An additional wing, a sort of shed, serves as an exterior parlor, where,

through the prescribed grating, the nuns may speak of God to brave chiefs and warriors of the Indian race.

The colonists, fortunately, have invented an "order of architecture," which is not expensive: a few strong posts set in the ground, some bars to join them, the whole covered with planks and finished off with rough plastering. A chapel in this style, before the winter closes in, is raised, and receives the "gilded tabernacle," the parting gift of a Parisian friend. It is a delightful "devout chapel", so one affirms who saw it<sup>1</sup>; "agreeable for its poverty," and above all, precious to the good Ursulines and their pious foundress, for the Adorable Presence which it procures them. The cloister-wall, enclosing a large space, is formed by a palisade, and by the solid barrier of the mountain, plentifully decked at its base and at various heights, with shrubbery, wild vines, and flowers. Within this cloistered tract, they set up a sort of rustic arbor, on the plan of a Huron lodge, to serve as another class-room for Indian women and children.

All these accommodations are of a nature to suggest thoughts of the contrast between a poor hut in Canada, and the elegant lordly castles of Savonnières and de Vaubougon, or even the spacious monasteries of Dieppe and Tours. But Canada is to them an earthly Paradise, and if they have anything to complain of, it is that they have not enough to suffer. Thus they wrote to their friends, even after that terrible scourge, the small-pox, had transformed their school-room and the dormitory into a hospital.

Already, three years before the arrival of the nuns, a sort of pestilence had spread terror and desolation among the

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1—Mother St. Clare mentions it thus in a charming letter to her community in Paris, after her arrival in Canada.

Indian tribes. This year, soon after the departure of the trading vessels, the small-pox, in its most virulent form, made its appearance at Sillery.

The little convent in the Lower Town was, in its turn, invaded by the malady, which attacked the Indian children only. All the seminarists—as the Indian boarders were called—caught the infection, affording the nuns abundant occasion for the exercise of charity. The beds of the patients, placed upon the floor, left hardly room to move among them. Night and day the poor little sufferers were tended by their indefatigable nurses. Four died of it before mid-winter, after which its intensity diminished. At the end of February, it had entirely disappeared; but not until the stock of clothing destined to the use of the Indian children for two years was exhausted, as well as the provision of linen for the community.

Throughout this trial, the nuns kept up their spirits and their health. Their only anxiety was, lest the pagan Indians, believing the sickness to be the effects of baptism, should refuse to send them their children. In this they were happily deceived. With the cessation of the malady, the nuns found more congenial occupation, instructing Indian women and girls. The men also frequently appeared at the grating and listened to their teachings with as much docility as the children. Their seminarists increased to eighteen or twenty. Two French pupils were even then boarding in the little convent. The number of day-scholars is not stated, but it included “all who were of an age to be instructed.” When the warm season returned, the bark cabin became a classroom; and, from the surrounding shrubbery, came fresh air, and sweet songs, mingling with the cadence of the waters plashing upon the beach.

In July, the annual fleet brought them Mothers St. Athanasius and St. Clare from the Ursuline Monastery of Paris



to aid them in their arduous labors. The latter, writing to her community soon after her arrival, describes her new home, where they "live in admirable peace and union." Mother Mary of the Incarnation, she says, "treats me with too much honor; the sweet odor of sanctity seems to surround her, and to embalm all who approach her. Mother St. Joseph is a charming person, most accomplished in every way. During recreation she often makes us laugh till we cry: it is impossible to be melancholy in her company. She loves the little Indian girls like a mother. After catechism, she teaches them to sing hymns and to play the viol.

"Sometimes she gives them leave to perform one of their own pantomime dances, and the little scholars make no ceremony of inviting Madame de la Peltrie to dance with them, which she does with the best grace in the world."

The two Parisians commence studying the Indian language with courage, remarking that the other nuns are "well advanced." They have to learn "the grammar and write exercises, like students in Latin." Two languages, at least, are required; the Algonquin, and the Huron<sup>1</sup>. All are busy, and all are happy in that little convent, where the love of God reigns supreme.

The Ursulines had indeed come to the colony at an opportune moment. The field in which the good missionaries labored long with little success, had now begun to yield fruit. Our Mothers considered themselves supremely happy in being called to aid in gathering in the precious harvest.

The difficulties of the situation were however great. The

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1—The Algonquin and the Huron are the mother tongues of a hundred tribes who wandered over the North American continent, between the sources of the Mississippi and the Atlantic as far as the coast of North Carolina.

revenue of the foundress was only nine hundred livres ; a larger sum had been expended on the lodgings, such as they were, in the Lower Town, and on the seminarists. Madame de la Peltrie had calculated for the expenses of six ; but they had taken in three times that number. It must be borne in mind that not only the Indian pupils, but sometimes their families, had to be fed and clothed gratis. At the parlor, where the nuns exercised their zeal in favor of the Indian men, it was not merely the bread of instruction that was broken : according to the Indian laws of hospitality, the food of the body was indispensable. It would have been an affront to send away a guest without offering him to eat. The "*pot of sagamité*" must be constantly on the fire. From time to time, a more "splendid banquet" was prepared for sixty or eighty persons. Then it required "a bushel of black plums, twenty-four pounds of bread, a due quantity of Indian-meal or ground peas, a dozen of tallow candles melted, two or three pounds of fat pork", all well boiled together. "It would be a pity, says our judicious Mother, to deprive these poor people of such a feast, since it requires no more to content even their sachems and war-chiefs, that is to say, their princes."

But if the revenue of the foundation was insufficient, charity, in those times, was not an idle word. Pious friends in France, moved by the letters of the nuns, sent them presents : clothing for their seminarists, tools for their workmen, a chalice for their altar. The good Ursulines of Paris and of Tours are always first on the list of benefactresses.

In the *Relations*, also, the Fathers set forth the poverty of the little convent, and the good the nuns were doing. Father Vimont laments that they have not the means to build, and invites in his amiable manner, "two courageous young ladies provided with a good dowry, to come to the assistance of the

little convent, which contains more joy within its narrow limits than ever was found in the palace of the Cæsars !”

In the spring of 1641, Madame de la Peltrie laid the foundation-stone of the monastery, on the advantageous site granted by the Governor, in the name of the Hundred Associates. The deed specified that the donation <sup>1</sup> of “six arpents of land within the limits of the city of Quebec, was to enable the said Reverend Ursuline Mothers to build a convent where they may live according to the rules of their institute, and devote themselves to the education of young girls, French <sup>2</sup> and Indian.”

While the building was going on, the number of their seminarists amounted to forty-eight or fifty ; the parlor visits exceeded eight hundred in the course of one year.

Mother Mary of the Incarnation, with all her zeal, confesses that the nuns, five in number, have had to labor excessively, and that the visits of the Indians at the parlor were continual. “But, she adds, the providence of our Heavenly Father provides for all things. The pot of *sagamité* was never empty.”

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1—To this day a mass is said in the Chapel of the Monastery for the “Messieurs de la Compagnie.”

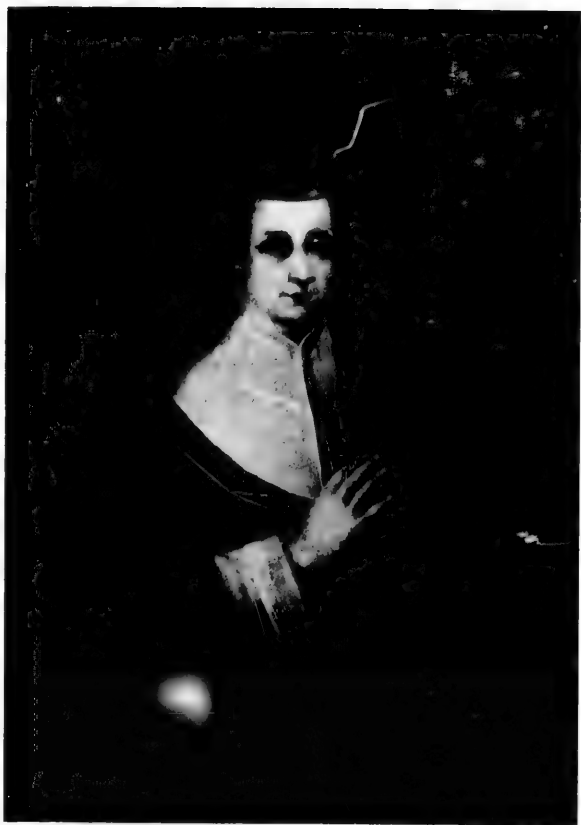
2—From 1639 to 1642 about forty families had settled within some fifteen miles of Quebec.

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MME DE LA PELTRIE,

Foundress of the Ursuline Convent of Quebec.

## CHAPTER V

1639-1641

## MADAME DE LA PELTRIE AND THE INDIANS

In the little convent on the wharf, the "Louvre" of those French ladies who inhabited it, were also the good foundress, and her attendant, Charlotte Barré. It must have been from motives of the purest charity and self-denial, that Madame de la Peltrie resolved to content herself with such accommodations as that poor cottage afforded: all that she could save by living in poverty would be so much gain for the poor Indians!

But our readers have contemplated long enough the picture of privations and sufferings. Let us follow the generous French lady, when she goes abroad, always in the interest of the dear seminarists, or of the missions in general.

On one of these occasions, an incident occurred which has been recorded at full length in the *Relations* (1639).

It was the Feast of the Assumption, only fifteen days after the nuns had been welcomed to their new home. There was a grand procession, in which six Indians, in splendid robes of silk and velvet, lately sent them by the French monarch, followed the cross and banner. A hundred of their fur-clad brethren, marching two by two, in the order assigned them, came after. Next walked Madame de la Peltrie, leading some of her little seminarists, in new tunics of red camelot, and white caps; then came a long file of Indian girls and women, clothed in garments of their own fashion: a frock, made of a blanket or a moose-skin, falling from the shoulders to the knee, and fastened around the waist by a girdle, their

long black hair simply gathered behind their neck ; necklaces and bracelets of colored beads completed their attire on this holiday occasion.

The clergy headed the French population in the usual order.

But it is not of the procession itself that we write. We shall not follow it from station to station, pausing at the hospital and then at the Ursulines, where the nuns sing the *Exaudiat*, and the poor Indians, as usual, wonder and admire. Neither shall we tell of the dinner given at the Castle to a hundred of the Indians, while the six, transformed by French court-dresses into *gentlemen*—all but their bronzed faces—were treated as royal guests at the Jesuits' table.

Our purpose is with what took place after vespers, when the Superior of the Jesuits was notified that an Indian council was awaiting his presence in the College-hall.

Father Le Jeune did not go alone, but invited the Governor, the newly arrived Father Vimont and Madame de la Peltrie to take part in the proceedings. Entering, they found Indian chiefs and notables, to the number of twenty or twenty-five, seated around the hall, in their own style, on mats they had provided. The Governor, with Madame de la Peltrie and Miss Barré on one side, and the two Jesuits on the other, have taken seats and are waiting.

An Algonquin chief, rising, looks around upon the assembly, and begins : " Be attentive, Father Le Jeune ; let not thy spirit wander, give heed to my discourse." " Ho ! ho ! " answers the Father, and the Algonquin continues :—" The words thou hearest are not mine. I am the mouth of all my brethren seated here. We wish to believe in God : we wish to cultivate the ground ; but we want help. Now, tell our great chief Ononthio to write to our king. Let him say : All the redmen wonder to hear that you think of them. They say to you : Pity us, send us help. We wish to cultivate the

ground. We cannot make houses like yours unless you help us. Father Le Jeune, tell thy brother, who has come to be in thy place, to write for us. Write thou also, that our king may believe us. I have spoken."

The first orator takes his seat, an Abenaki rises and urges the same suit with much pathos. He concludes: "Certainly thou speakest well, promising to help us to live like men. Do not deceive us. I go to my home, there, where the sun stands in the middle of the sky (the South). When I come back, the snow will yet be on the mountains. I will come to see if thou sayest the truth, if thou hast men to help us, that we may no more live in the woods like the beasts."

This spirited appeal, translated by Father Le Jeune, moved the assembly to compassion. De Montmagny promised to do all in his power for them. Father Vimont was nigh losing patience, seeing that for the want of a little money those poor people were debarred from receiving religious instruction.

Madame de la Peltrie exclaims: "Alas! must it be said that we cannot aid these good people to save their souls? The expense of one ball in Paris, one *soirée*, would procure the means of opening heaven to these poor creatures. Reverend Father, continues she, addressing Le Jeune, tell them that if I could aid them with my own hands, I would do so. I will try, at least, to plant something for them."

Her speech, translated, made the Indian braves smile.

"Tell the lady, said one, that corn planted by hands as delicate as hers, would *take a long time to ripen*."

The conclusion of the assembly was, that a great effort should be made to help the Indians the next spring, according to their request.

Now for another scene. Let us follow Madame de la Peltrie, on one of her frequent excursions to Sillery. All the seminarians accompany her on holiday occasions.



There she sometimes finds the squaws gathering corn, which they suspend along the sloping sides of their bark habitations, till they look gay as if decked for some festal ceremony; or they are roasting it before the fire, previous to pounding it in their wooden mortars. Sometimes a family, just come to live in the hamlet and not yet provided with any other utensils but those of their own manufacture, cook a dinner in her presence, kindling a fire by striking two white stones together; then, filling a large bark tray or bowl with water, they heat other stones red-hot and throw them in, till they have boiled a piece of meat. Perhaps they prefer it roasted; then they show her a cord made of tender bark or of hemp, with which they suspend their steak, turning it as adroitly as the kitchen-maid manages a spit.

If it is a pleasant day when *Madame* is there, the little Indian boys are at play with the bow and arrow, not as noisy as a similar group of little French boys, but silent as the braves who listen to a harangue in council, unless some unskilful throw, or some unlooked-for success, provoke a laugh or a good-natured joke.

A well-known author has said, that "simplicity of soul is an inexhaustible source of happiness<sup>1</sup>." This simplicity was possessed by the Indians of our America. They only needed to be enlightened by religion, to be delivered of their gloomy superstitions, cruel practices, revengeful passions, and absurd pride, in order to be happy. That liberty of life which was theirs; that freedom from the shackles of custom and the cares of business which civilized man seeks from time to time, and enjoys with infinite zest, was not incompatible with the duties of a Christian.

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1—Chateaubriand.

But turning from this digression, we are again with Madame de la Peltrie, at Sillery.

The second year that the Ursulines passed in Canada, the Foundress went to the Indian chapel for midnight Mass, with a few of the most exemplary of the seminarists. Little Agnes, not yet five years old, was of the number. Returning to the Convent, this wee-one astonished the nuns by her vivid description of all she had seen and all she had heard. There was a sermon, and she well understood that the Bethlehemites of old refused a shelter to the Blessed Virgin and the Infant Jesus. Her indignation against them is great; and her compassion for the sufferings of the Divine Infant in the Cave of Bethlehem, is so real that she moves the nuns to tears while she imitates the tone of voice, the gestures, as well as the words of the preacher.

But Madame de la Peltrie as well as Miss Barré were oftener at home than abroad, and we shall hear of both several times yet, as well as of little Agnes.

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## CHAPTER VI

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### EFFECTS OF INSTRUCTION

From the forest-home of the young Indian girl to the Convent, the distance, in a moral sense, was infinite. Frolicsome and wild as the little animals that roamed with her, she knew as little as they of obedience, or wholesome restraint. The only authority she was taught to respect, was that of her mother, or her aged grand-parents; but if she chose to be

wilful, on no account was she punished, nor compelled to obey.

Her clothing was scanty and of the roughest material. Only in winter were her feet and limbs protected by a coarse sort of moccasin, and gaiters. She knew of no other cosmetics but soot and bear's grease ; her matted hair had never been visited by a comb nor by the scissors. Her bed had been the ground by the wigwam fire, shared equally by the dogs and by the rest of the family.

It is not surprising that some of these " wild birds " caged for the first time, occasionally flew off to the forest ; but when by affection and great patience, they had been tamed, they proved most docile to instructions, and most exemplary in piety.

Little Algonquins from Sillery were the first seminarists the Ursulines undertook to form, and as neither understood the language of the other, the difficulty must have been extreme. " A great desire to speak is a great help towards doing so," says Mother Mary. We may readily believe it, since the nuns were able to begin to instruct in Algonquin before the end of two months. Mother St. Joseph learned also the Huron tongue and had occasion for it in the following spring.

But with what success have the Ursulines toiled during these three years ? Of what avail were their instructions ? " A tree is known by its fruit." Let us examine the letters, written by the nuns to their friends, and we shall find that they were consoled beyond measure, by the miracles of grace they daily witnessed among these same little forest-girls. The *Relations* concur in the same statements.

Mother Mary declares that these new Christians are as meek as lambs, and that after their baptism they preserve an admirable purity of conscience. Among the seminarists of

the first year, she mentions little Marie Gamitiens (godchild of Mlle. de Chevreuse), who at the age of five or six years, is no sooner awake in the morning than she begins her prayers; she says her beads during mass, and sings hymns in her own language. Marie Madeleine Abatenau (godchild of another noble lady), is a model of obedience and ability, knowing her catechism and reciting her prayers, with a devotion capable of inspiring others with the same. She also is only six years old.

But Agnes Chabdikwachich is twelve. It was she who seeing one of the Fathers at a little distance from the place where she was making up her bundle of faggots, threw away her hatchet, crying out: "Teach me," and this, so winningly that the good Father pleaded her cause, and brought her to the convent with one of her little companions. Both were soon prepared for baptism, and at Easter, with two others, made their first communion. Agnes is not only well instructed in her catechism, she is also skilful with her needle. She handles the viol, knows how to read, and is so gentle and well behaved, that she merits the name of *lamb*, which she bears.

Little Nicole Assipanse is seven years old. At the end of five months, Nicole knows the principal mysteries of religion, her catechism and her prayers, so well, that when her mother comes for her, returning from the winter's chase, the little daughter teaches her poor pagan father and mother to know the true God. With all her talents, she has the true Indian character: she must go with her parents, who have no other child; she coaxes her mother, and gains her point.

But here is Marie Negabamat, so accustomed to the wild life of the woods that the good chief, her father, to entice her to remain in the convent, sends with her two of her friends

already baptized. This was not enough; she takes to the woods in a few days, tearing her red tunic to shreds. One more trial and Marie is obedient.

She becomes the model, not only of the seminarists but of the French pupils, although, as our Mother remarks, "the young girls of Quebec are extremely well brought up." From day to day she advances in piety; she relishes religious instructions, has a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and so loves prayer that when the pious exercises are over among the seminarists, she goes into the room where the French pupils are, to continue them.

Marie Amiskivevan wins the heart of all who see her. She is seventeen years old, and a model of candor and innocence. She excites her companions to piety, treating them with all the charity of a mother. Moreover, she speaks a little French, and has aided the nuns greatly in their study of her language.

Another young Algonquin girl, from Three Rivers, receives the grace of baptism in such dispositions of fervor and contrition, that Father Buteux, who had sent her to the convent, is moved to tears, and tells the nuns that this conquest alone is well worth all the sacrifices they have made, and all the toils they have undergone in Canada.

In reading of such effects of divine grace, we understand better how the nuns could endure with joy the privations and hardships of the mission. Let us cite a few more examples.

A little band were preparing for their first communion. Father Pijart once, and Mother Mary two or three times a day, instructed them how to prepare for their Heavenly Guest. They were heard exclaiming: "Oh! when will Jesus come! when will He give us the kiss of peace in our souls."

Marie Negabamat was in great jubilation, "Why are

you so joyful, inquired one?" "Oh! cried she, I shall soon receive Jesus into my heart."

Some begged permission to fast on the eve of their first communion, and afterwards made that their practice whenever they prepared for the reception of the great Sacrament. These children were not more than twelve years old.

Many of the Indian girls had first to be prepared for the sacrament of baptism. One day, five were baptized in the little chapel of the convent. At other times the sacrament was administered to men and women, old and young. Their edifying deportment was most touching. One young woman had waited many months for this precious grace. When the healing waters were poured over her, turning to the spectators, she exclaimed: "There! it is done! my soul is cleansed, at last."

Were these little forest-girls susceptible of gratitude, of benevolence, and the other fine qualities of the mind which adorn their possessor? Let their teachers, Mothers Ste. Croix and St. Joseph, answer: "Our seminarists, they declare, are exceedingly grateful, and appreciate highly the services we render them. One day, seeing the difficulty we have to learn their language, they exclaimed: 'Oh! if we could give you our tongues to speak with, we would do so with pleasure.' A better proof of their gratitude is found in their docility, their affection for their teachers, their willingness to be corrected of their faults—a thing so contrary to the customs of their race—their readiness to conform to the regulations of the school, and to remain away from their parents."

As an instance of their kindness towards each other, let us cite another passage from the long pages before us. "Some new scholars had come in; there was no clothing prepared to put upon them;—quickly our seminarists supply the

deficiency, without being requested to do so, bringing whatever they could spare from their own little wardrobe. It is they who commence the instructions. They have no greater pleasure than to teach the new-comers what we have taught them."

All the scholars mentioned thus far were Montagnais or Algonquins.

The first Huron seminarist, was the niece of the famous war-chief Chihatenhwa. He had seen the "holy virgins," *les saintes filles*, robed in black, who had come to teach the little Indian girls the way to heaven; and others, dressed differently, who would take care of the sick. Great was the admiration of his countrymen when they heard the marvellous story. He brings his little Teresa to the Convent, where she becomes a prodigy of learning and of piety. When next the Huron flotilla covers the river, Chihatenhwa, from afar, points out to his brethren the "House of Jesus," and hastens to meet his little Teresa. She is only thirteen, but she has the zeal of an apostle. Her exhortations startle and subdue the most obstinate. On their return to Huronia, they publish her fame throughout the tribe. "Teresa has more sense than any one who has ever appeared in their country. Doubtless the one who has instructed her is also the greatest genius among the French." Once, at Sillery, she holds a discourse to catechumens, who remain with her more than two hours! The sachems, even of other tribes, listen to her with reverence. As to other attainments, Teresa speaks two languages with facility, and sings in Huron, French, and Latin.

The nuns, at another time, must take a few days to attend to their own souls, "for of what avail would it be to preach to others and be one's self a cast-away?" The little girls are to have a week of holidays, with Madame de la Peltrie. But

they must make no noise, for fear of disturbing their good Mothers, who are conversing with God in retreat; and, lo! all these late barbarians are as well versed in good breeding and genuine politeness, as pupils of the most accomplished boarding-school. They speak low, they moderate their play; yet, the time seems long, and when their dear Mothers reappear, it is to be overwhelmed with caresses.

Teresa the Huron resolves to make a retreat, in imitation of the nuns. She hides herself in the thicket along the mountain's base, in order to pray for the conversion of her countrymen without ceasing, and to let no one interfere between her and God. Won by her example, the others beg to be allowed to make a retreat, and transforming their school-room into cells, they set about it with such a will that the nuns must interfere to moderate their fervor.

Were these little Indian girls attached to their convent home? Let us ask Teresa who had remained more than two years. Oh! the separation was most painful. But the missionaries were anxious to have the influence of the young seminarist among her countrymen, and her parents could no longer endure her absence. Teresa makes the sacrifice, for she has learned obedience; she leaves her dear convent Mothers. From Three Rivers, she writes to Mother Mary of the Incarnation:—

“ My dear Mother,

“ I am going to my distant home; we are ready to start. I thank you for all the care you have bestowed upon me. I thank you for having taught me to serve God. Is it for a thing of small value that I offer you my thanks? Never shall I forget you.—TERESA.”

Two days after she had confided her letter to Father du



Perron who was returning to Quebec, she, with all who accompanied her, fell into the hands of the ferocious Iroquois. Faithful to God during her captivity, she continued to instruct and to edify. After three years she was rescued, through the intervention of the Governor, who made a present for her release at the great assembly for the treaty of peace, at Three Rivers (1645).

The good conduct of the seminarists among their own people was another subject of immense joy, both to the nuns and the missionaries. It was their office to regulate the pious exercises, to say the prayers, to choose the hymns, and to teach the others how to examine their conscience.

Three young girls had been required to follow their parents during the winter chase. On their return, in spring, their first visit was to the Blessed Sacrament ; their next to the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, to crown her statue with the flowers they had brought from the woods. Then, entering the convent, they gave the nuns an account of all they had done during their absence. " Oh, said they, how painful it was to be so long away from holy Mass and the sacraments ! " During the winter, they had written twice to the Superior of the Jesuits, to beg him to send a priest to their people. The letters passed from hand to hand, and were even shown to the Governor, who, like the others, pronounced them admirable in style and execution, as well as for the sentiments expressed.

But it is time to pause. The reader who has seen how Mother Mary writes to her intimate friends, will understand how she could say in the second year of her labors : " The *Relation* will make mention of the seminarists and the consolation they give us, but the truth is, if all were published, it would appear past belief. They lose all their barbarity once they are baptized, and one who has seen them running

wild in the forest, cannot, without emotion, behold them approach the holy Table, gentle as lambs, to receive the true Lamb of God. No one would have thought that they could be brought to live in the cloister; yet they do remain, willingly, and do not leave it without permission."

The elegant historian, Bancroft, had he trusted the *Letters* and the *Relations*, from which we have abridged the above account, would have given unrestricted praise where he has said: "Is it wonderful if the natives were touched by a benevolence which their poverty and squalid misery could not appall? Their education was attempted; and the venerable ash-tree still lives beneath which Mother Mary of the Incarnation, so famed for chastened piety, genius, and good judgment, toiled though in vain for the education of the Huron children."

The "education" given by the missionaries and by the nuns had sufficed to soften the manners of a barbarous race, to elevate their souls by the knowledge of the high and holy truths of revealed religion, to teach them to forgive, instead of torturing, a captured foe, to practise the austere virtues of Christianity, instead of following the instincts of a depraved and degraded nature. In this success, they found abundant reward for their toil, which no one, surely, should deem to have been "in vain."

This effect of the instruction given by the Ursulines has already appeared in the preceding pages; those that follow will prove it still more abundantly, while we behold hundreds of Indian children, as well as men and women, receiving with joy the inestimable boon of faith and transmitting it to other poor pagans in the distant forest-wilds of the continent.

## CHAPTER VII

1642-1650

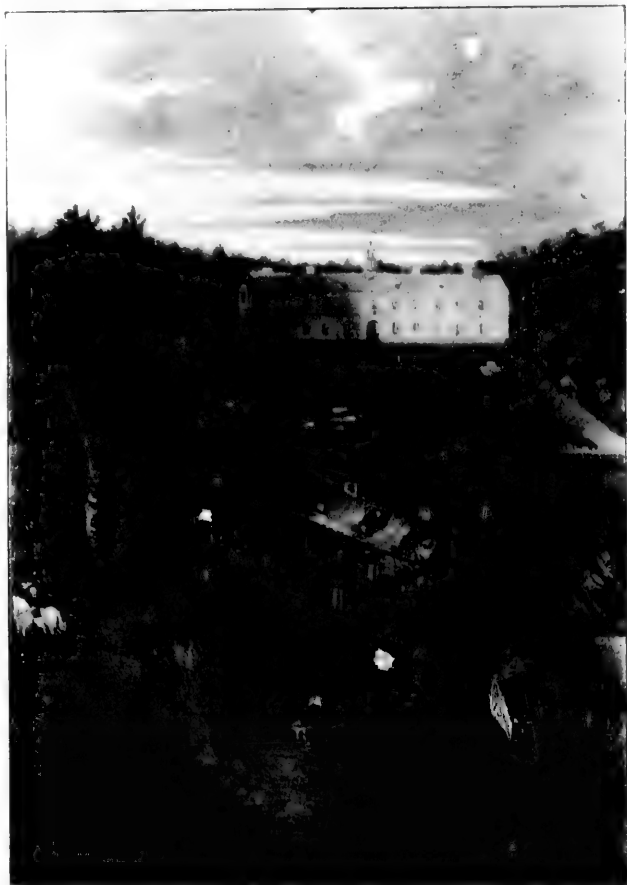
## EIGHT YEARS IN THE NEW MONASTERY

The conversion of the aborigenes, which Mother Mary of the Incarnation had seen prefigured as a church just emerging from clouds and darkness, was now rapidly progressing. On all sides, the mists of error were retiring, and soon whole nations embraced Christianity with the fervor of the primitive ages. But was this Church destined to be perpetuated through a long space of time ? Or was it destined to people the heavenly Jerusalem with one rich colony of souls, and then diminish with the nations that formed it ? This latter destiny, Mother Mary foresaw, as appears by her letters. So much the more ardent, if possible, was her zeal for the welfare of souls, purchased with the blood of Christ ; so much the more strenuous her efforts to be useful to them, by building for them a more spacious house, where greater numbers of them could be instructed unto eternal life.

The missionary Fathers often expressed their desire to see the monastery completed, foretelling that the nuns would have more labor than they could perform, whether for the Indians or for the French population.

That monastery was, at last, in readiness to receive inhabitants. It was a stately edifice, for the times, built of dark-colored lime-stone, quarried upon the spot ; it was three stories in height, its length being ninety-two feet and its width twenty-eight.

Three other massive stone edifices stood within the limits of the city where the primitive forest yet victoriously dis-



FIRST URSULINE CONVENT.

Built in 1642. Destroyed by fire, December 31, 1650.



puted for the mastery with the encroachments of civilization. At various distances from these centres were scattered a certain number of dwelling-houses, built, some of hewn pine-timber, some of stone.

Evidently the colonists, if yet few in number, were provided with means of perpetuating the civilization they had brought to these northern wilds. The Fort would protect them from being cut off by the native barbarians; the college of the Jesuits and the monastery of the Ursulines provided for the wants of their souls and the education of their offspring; the hospital assured them an asylum for the sick and afflicted.

To the Indians, the new "House of Jesus" was a wonder, worth coming a long way to see. If the little tenement on the wharf, dignified with the name of "Convent" had been to them so precious, was not this a more secure and certain refuge?

The new Monastery might well be called "The House of Jesus"; no one else could claim to be its proprietor. It had not been built by means of bazaars or lotteries, so convenient at the present day to raise funds when coffers are empty. Neither was it due to the endowments of the foundress: these barely sufficed for the expenses of the convent, where, far from exacting payment for board or teaching, food, raiment, and instruction were distributed gratis. The only banker known to Mother Mary and her nuns, was divine Providence. It had not failed them on the present occasion.

With grateful hearts, they prepare to take possession of their new home; yet it is in a spirit of penance, more than of joy, as if foreseeing the trials reserved for them and for their dear neophytes. The fast of the vigil of the Presentation was a prelude to another on the day of removal, with all its cares and fatigues.

At an early hour, the nuns, preceded by Father Vimont and followed by their French pupils and their seminarists, were seen climbing the steep mountain-path which led from their little convent to the Upper Town. Crowds of Indians followed, or awaited the sight among the forest-trees along the way. In the cold atmosphere of autumn, treading the crisp, fallen leaves that covered the frosty ground, there was little to make the morning walk pleasant, but when they approached the goodly mansion prepared for them, all were deeply affected. The poor forest-children, who had never beheld anything so grand, could not refrain from shouts of admiration, wondering if indeed this "*great wigwam*" was to be their home.

But they soon proceeded again quietly and with recollection. They knew that the holy sacrifice of mass was to be offered by the revered Father Gabriel Lalemant, who closed the procession, bearing the most Holy Sacrament. They must think over the hymns they were going to sing, and their good Mothers were preparing for Holy Communion.

Shall we follow them till all kneel in the new chapel? It is not very spacious, since it measures only twenty-eight feet by seventeen, yet it is brilliant with lights and tapestried for the occasion with red stuffs, borrowed from the store and destined to other usages. The gilded tabernacle, the embroidered altar-front, the highly colored pictures, the priest in radiant vestments, the sweet odor from the censer and the sweeter voices of the little seminarists, mingling with the grave notes of the pious nuns during the Holy Sacrifice, all combined to make this first Mass in the monastery impressive. It was still more so when the future martyr, before distributing the Bread of Life, addressed a few words of exhortation to the fervent Spouses of Christ—words of one to whom the realities of another world were more present

than the passing events of this—words that came from a heart burning with the love of God, and longing to seal that love with his blood in the midst of sufferings.

But let us leave the chapel, to consider the rest of the premises. The interior of the convent was still far from being finished. The sound of the saw, the chisel, and hammer, continued all winter, while partitions were completed, doors set, and ceilings made secure. Four ample fire-places which, before spring, devour one hundred and seventy-five cords of wood, are needed to drive away the cold. During the night, as a means of keeping from freezing, they have recourse to large boxes or chests to hold both the bedding and the sleeper; yet even with this precaution, the cold penetrates uncomfortably. To remain away from the fire-side more than an hour at a time, even when well wrapped up, would be a great imprudence.

The long pine table is served as heretofore, with "salt fish and pork," garnished with vegetables, such as the country produced.

The courageous nuns who never said to sufferings and toil: "That is enough," had only desired to be lodged more comfortably, in order to be more useful. During the following eight years, that brightest period for the conversion of the poor Indians of Canada, their labors were incredible.

Besides the regular seminarists who, as we have already said, were clothed and fed at the expense of the convent, and who (as the *Relations* affirm) amounted one year to as many as eighty, the nuns were daily called upon to give instruction to Indian women in their class-rooms, and to Indian men at their parlor. Among these were good Christian Indians from Sillery, where were now (1642-43) from thirty-five to forty families. From this centre the faith spread throughout the



country, from Miscou and Tadoussac to the canton of the Hurons.

Here, it is the good Charles Meiaskwat, whose zeal transforms him into an apostle, not only for those of his own nation on the Saguenay, but even for the Abenakis on the Kennebec. There, it is another of Mother Mary's parlor visitors, the brave chief, Noël Negabamat, who knows no greater happiness than to explain the Christian doctrine to all who will listen to him. Again, it is a woman, nearly sixty years of age, who profits so well of the parlor instructions that she, too, becomes a missionary. In the depth of winter she penetrates the forests, and seeks at a distance of many days' journey, a savage tribe who have not yet heard the name of God. Doubtless the Fathers did not exaggerate the value of such aids as these, when they said: "The Indian, who is a good Christian and really zealous, does more good among his countrymen than three Jesuit missionaries."

Warned by the fervid exhortations of these new Apostles, whole tribes, all over the country, were seen moving in the direction of the various missionary stations, Tadoussac, Three Rivers, Quebec. The greater number came to the chief French settlement to see the strange sights it afforded of European buildings and manners, at the same time that it promised them not only the succor of the "black robes," but also of the "holy virgins."

The bare enumeration of all these visitors would be tedious. Let it suffice to instance the following (we quote from the *Relations*, 1643). "While the Attikamegues (a tribe of Algonquians from Three Rivers) sojourned at Quebec, they went often to the Ursulines to be instructed, demanding with importunity, to be taught their prayers or their catechism. After the instructions, the hunger of these poor people must

be appeased, so that they occasioned as much expense perhaps as the seminarists themselves."

At the same time, some of the Abenakis were at Sillery, and were not less eager to be instructed. The following year came the Iroquets from the great island of the Allumettes, having passed through the country of their enemies, the Iroquois. "The Iroquets, camped near the monastery, went every day to the nuns' chapel to be instructed by Father Dequen; when sufficiently instructed, they were baptized there. During six weeks, the Ursulines fed this troop of eighty persons, after mass, and again at a later hour, after giving them instruction at their parlor. The women came in their turn, entering the class-room for the same purpose.

"During the same year, numbers of Hurons, who remained at Sillery during the winter, were at the convent every day for instructions. Cold or storm could not deter them. They remained two or three hours at a time, always occupied in learning their prayers or the Christian doctrine. These, as well as the others, must have food before they go."

It is needless to multiply quotations; they would show a similar state of things during the following six years, (to 1650), which is the period under consideration in the present chapter.

Our readers will have, with us, but one difficulty, and that is to comprehend how these seven nuns—that was their number until 1644—could suffice for such labors: religious instructions in three languages, French, Algonquin, and Huron; cooking, distributing food to the family within, and strangers without; teaching their seminarists to read, to write and sew; teaching their French pupils "all that is necessary to fit them for the station in society to which they belong;" writing letters to the missionaries and to their friends—not letters of ceremony, but often of many folio

pages—to say nothing of their religious exercises, which could by no means have been neglected.

The letters of Mother Mary of the Incarnation during this period are most characteristic. It is not of *her* seminarists, *her* labors and toils that she chiefly entertains her friends. Oh, no! In her charity, she identifies herself with all who labor for the conversion of the Indians. She surveys the field of missionary labor, from Labrador to the Great Lakes; she counts the chapels that are built, the number of baptisms, the holy deaths. She knows all the nomadic tribes that come to be instructed. She shares the perils of the missionary, his enthusiasm, and his longings for martyrdom. After filling eight or twelve pages with such topics, she adds—"A word now of our seminarists; they give us every possible satisfaction. Their piety, their devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, their docility, their generosity in overcoming their defects, all this is ravishing; yet it strikes us less now that we are accustomed to it." At other times she merely says: "God has blessed our labors this year as during the preceding ones; we have as much as we can do, especially during the winter months, when the warriors leave us their children while they go to hunt."

Later, when the country from Quebec to lake Huron becomes one great arena where scenes at once distressing and consoling are enacted, she suffers with those that suffer, rejoices in all that conduces to the glory of God, and helps to obtain by her prayers, that abundance of grace which was poured out so copiously upon the new Christians, who often had to pass from the waters of baptism to the fire their enemies had enkindled around their habitations.

Taking up to the thread of our narrative, we should record, in the autumn of 1643, the return of Madame de la Peltrie from Montreal, where she had accompanied Miss

Mance, the foundress of the Hospital of Ville-Marie, eighteen months previous. Great was the joy at the convent, both among the nuns and the little seminarists, some of whom, being "old scholars," had not failed to pray for the dear lady's return, every day during her absence.

The foundress was not an idle spectator of the laborious occupations of the nuns. It was her right, she insisted, to prepare the little Indian girls for convent-life, where cleanliness is a first principle. The amount of scrubbing with soap and warm water it required, together with the long and patient use of the comb and the scissors, to prepare these little forest girls for their new garments, was not sufficient to disconcert her. She loved also to conduct them, for a holiday, to Sillery, where the parents of many of the seminarists lived. Like so many "birds set free" they would fly to their various lodges, passing the time in romping, playing with their little brothers and sisters, around their mothers. But when the signal of departure was given, from every side, they would hasten, gathering around their *ningay*, "darling Mother", embracing her with more affection than their own parents.

The small building known as Madame de la Peltrie's house, and which twice served to shelter the entire community, was erected after her return from Montreal.

From the year 1646, it is within the Monastery, occupying through choice the last place among the sisterhood and sharing all their privations, that we shall find the good foundress, enjoying in seclusion that peace of mind which is the reward of the true servants of God.

Other laborers came in, from time to time, to share the hardships and the joys of the pioneers. A lay-sister from the Monastery of Dieppe arrived before the nuns had quitted their little convent on the wharf. It was the good Sister

St. Laurent, who proved a real treasure to the community. The Ursulines of Ploërmel sent one of their number, Mother Marie Anne of the Seraphim; Tours sent two, Mothers Anne of St. Cecilia and Anne of Notre Dame. The venerable Archbishop of Tours was happy to contribute once more to the welfare of the convent he had blessed so heartily, and sent out his own carriage to convey the two new missionaries as far as Poitiers. Mother St. Cecilia, after sharing some years the abundant privations and trials of the little community, returned to her monastery in France. Mother Anne de Notre-Dame, although feeble and suffering, persevered and rendered service in the classes, both French and Algonquin.

In 1645, Mother Mary of the Incarnation joyfully resigned the office of Superior to Mother St. Athanasius. Announcing the result of the elections to her son, she says: "Our dear Lord has made our hearts one, so that we can differ neither in our views nor our desires. We have elected Mother St. Athanasius, an excellent religious of the Congregation of Paris, who has such a spirit of union and charity that she would suffer death rather than disturb the peace that dwells with us."

In the following year, Miss Charlotte Barré, who had accompanied Madame de la Peltrie to Canada only on condition of being permitted to embrace the religious state, commenced her novitiate on the feast of the Presentation, with Catherine Lezeau, the latter as a lay-sister. Both persevered, and pronounced their vows after the usual probation of two years, having taken the names of St. Ignatius and St. Ursula.

Thus, the cloistered family in 1648, consisted of eight professed choir-nuns and two lay-sisters. Before the close of the year, a lady from the *grand monde*, Mademoiselle

Philippe-Gertrude de Boulogne, sister of Madame d'Ailleboust, joined the little community of Ursulines.

The triennial election of a Superior was made again in June (1648), *in pace et benedictione*<sup>1</sup>, resulting in the continuation of the same Mother in the office. Without anticipating more upon a future page, let it be said that Mother St. Athanasius was one of those remarkable women, whose precious and noble qualities have entitled her to the lasting esteem and gratitude of the community, which she continued to govern alternately with Mother Mary of the Incarnation, as long as both were spared. This served to cement indissolubly the union between the two congregations of Paris and Tours, represented about equally for many years in the monastery of Quebec.

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## CHAPTER VIII

1640 - 1652

### MOTHER ST. JOSEPH AND THE HURONS

From the Huron country to Quebec, by the circuitous water-route, it was a distance of, at least, nine hundred miles.

But to the redman of America, long journeys were not more expensive than his daily life. While his canoe glided stealthily along under the deep shadows of the overhanging forests, he knew on what banks to find the wild berries, the succulent roots; or, if his foot startled the deer and the wild

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<sup>1</sup>—"In peace and blessing." Thus marked in the *Journal des Jésuites*.

fowl from their covert, the quick arrow brought him his bill of fare, without a reckoning. Besides, there were strange sights to be seen, down where the white man had set his great fort on the top of a mountain. There were "big canoes" with wings; there were great "wigwams" not made of bark; there was a Captain of the day (a clock) that told the Frenchman when to eat, and when to sleep; in fine, beautiful beads to make wampum, robes of bright colors; bowls and ladles that would not burn, could be procured for beaver-skins and other furs, of which the Indian had an abundance.

These were some of the motives that, in 1630, had brought to the city of Champlain, one hundred and fifty canoes, bearing six or seven hundred of the tall, well-built, swarthy braves, from the north shores of Lake Huron. From Point Levy to the opposite cliffs of Quebec, the channel of the St. Lawrence was alive with their fantastic barks, each containing four or five savage warriors; their shoulders covered with shaggy hides, their visages glowing with paint of various colors; their long, naked arms, vigorously swaying the paddle.

This was the first time so large a number of these allies of the French had appeared at Quebec. In the following years, their visits were renewed, and generally corresponded to the expected arrival of merchant-ships from France. In 1639, there were stranger sights than ever. The Christian Huron, Joseph Chihatenhva, who, after his baptism, had lived like a saint, was animated with new fervor. Returning from his journey he went from town to town, preaching with heavenly eloquence, and publishing what he had seen. "Ah! said he, if you only knew what charity there is among those who believe in God, you would never remain in your superstitions. Even among those who have never seen each other, there is but one heart and one mind. The daughters of Sachems who have crossed the great Sea to live in Quebec,

have come for the love of us. When they arrived, there was such rejoicing, you would have said that all the people of Quebec were one. Oh ! how far are we from resembling them."

In the following spring, Joseph sent to the Convent his young niece, the charming Teresa, whom we have already mentioned. Mother St. Joseph, in the meantime, had studied the Huron language with such success that she was able to converse with Teresa, and with the braves who accompanied her. Soon Teresa was joined by other young Huron girls, and not an Indian of the nation could come to Quebec without seeing the wonderful, "wise virgin" who could speak their language.

The holy nun, so rich in the gifts of grace that we forget her noble birth and all her rare accomplishments, was to the poor Indians an angel from heaven; her words were their law, her influence was irresistible. Her name was known throughout the Huron country. Those who had never been in Quebec, knew the *Mother of the Hurons*, the *holy virgin*, as well as those who had been instructed by her in the faith. From the time Teresa, the niece of the great medicine-man, with some companions, had entered, there was constantly a class of young Huron girls at the convent.

There are amusing anecdotes related of the childlike simplicity of some of the Huron warriors.

One of the neophytes of Mother St. Joseph being invited by his companions to join them in the winter's chase, declined giving a decided answer, saying that he wished to consult his directress: upon which the other replied contemptuously: "You are not a man, but a woman!" The poor neophyte felt the reproach keenly, but stifled his anger, and came to recount his trials to Mother St. Joseph. He was exhorted to bear the



reproach patiently, as became a good Christian, who should know how to love his enemies. He replied with a sigh : "That I will do, but, O Mother! you do not know how hard it is for a *man to be called a woman.*"

The brave Jean Baptiste had another difficulty. He was at Quebec with all his family and lived by the hospitality of the nuns. One day, as he was going out to hunt, some of his fellows refused him what they had promised to provide. In his disappointment, he uttered some words of impatience. Perceiving his fault immediately, he wished to confess it; but his confessor was absent. There was still a resource left; he comes to see Mother St. Joseph, tells her what has happened, asking her to tell his confessor, when she would see him, that Jean Baptiste had sinned, but that he was extremely sorry, and begged God to pardon him.

Often the pagan Hurons, decided by their visit to Quebec to become Christians, remained many months, coming every day to the convent to be instructed. One of these whom Mother St. Joseph was instructing, was invited by the Algonquins to join them in a hunt. He consults the Mother, who tells him if he is in no hurry to be baptized, she sees no reason why he should not go; but if, on the contrary, he desires that grace very ardently, it would be better to remain and continue to be instructed.

Upon that, he replies with resolution : " It is decided that I shall not go. Certainly, my chief business here is to get baptized. I seek no other riches than that of being the child of God." He kept his word, received the grace of baptism some weeks later, and still remained in Quebec till Mother St. Joseph had prepared him for a fervent first communion.

The assiduity of the Huron neophytes to the parlor instructions, which lasted two or three hours when needed, has already been noticed; but we have not mentioned another tie

between the poor Indians and their *Mother*. By letters to her noble parents, Mother St. Joseph obtained abundant supplies for these poor people, her adopted children whom she cherished as her own spiritual family.

At the time she commenced her intercourse with the Hurons, there were thirteen missionaries in their country, laboring with a zeal capable of inspiring the most indifferent with admiration.

But the relentless Iroquois, those Romans of the New World, had vowed the destruction of another Carthage. With atrocious pertinacity they pursued their plan, until the land of the Hurons was a land of desolation. The hour of distress proved the hour of salvation. While misfortunes of every kind were upon them—famine, pestilence, war, in its most horrid forms—conversions multiplied. Crowds that had long deferred renouncing their superstitions, hastened to demand baptism.

The missionaries, after passing through such trials as are recorded of the most heroic confessors of the faith—the ordeal of fire and torture in every form which fiends could invent,—left upon the list of martyrs the names forever glorious of Daniel, Garnier, Chabanel, Brebœuf and Lalemant<sup>1</sup>, all personal friends of the Ursulines.

No one in the colony, perhaps, followed with more interest than Mother St. Joseph the different stages of that sad drama, destined to close by the extinction of the Huron nation; and when, in the summer of 1650, the last miserable remnant of a people that had lately reckoned 35,000 souls,

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1—The *Letters* of Mother Mary contain lengthy and interesting details of the labors, sufferings and combats of these martyrs.

Twenty-nine missionaries had labored for the conversion of the Hurons; seven of these had perished by the hand of violence.

set up their poor camp-huts within view of the monastery, no heart bled with a deeper wound than hers. Mother Mary of the Incarnation said it was her death-blow.

Soon they gathered around her, in troops of forty or fifty at a time,—as many as the parlor class-room and later the bark cabin could hold—men, women and children. Mother St. Joseph had the secret of consoling them, fortifying them with holy instructions, and inspiring them with sentiments of Christian resignation.

From the Huron seminarists in captivity among the Iroquois, the nuns had most consoling accounts. One of Mother St. Joseph's pupils, who had been carried off in 1643, at the age of thirteen or fourteen, was married, and thus had become mistress of one of those "long houses" where several families lived together. After ten years of captivity, the missionary not only found her firm in the faith, but she had gained others to worship her God and pray with her.

Such instances—and they were not unfrequent—show the value of the instructions given by the nuns. The bright wave, once set in motion, ran multiplying in widening circles, under the eye of Him who blessed it, in numbers that will be known only in heaven.

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## CHAPTER IX

1650

### ONE NIGHT, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

The year 1650, so fertile in trials and disasters, was drawing to a close. A clear, cold, December evening was brooding over the glistening landscape. The great constella-

tions which light the wintry firmament with splendor, were silently marking the early hours of the night. The dark form of the monastery looked not gloomy, for the ruddy glow of the casements told of cheerful fires and cheerful faces within. There was even the sound of merriment, for this was the hour of recreation.

One who had gained admittance on that evening, would have found the cloistered inmates enjoying in genial intercourse the social hour. Adjoining the chapel and choir, was the community-hall, which the nuns had just entered, leaving the small refectory, with the usual ejaculation : *Deus det nobis suam pacem*, "God give us His peace!" That peace was there, in the depth of their souls. We behold it in their countenances, as with words of gentle greeting they unfold already their parcels—knitting, sewing, mending—and take their seats around a plain centre-table, where two lighted candles invite them to utilize even the time allotted by rule to relaxation.

We have seen them all before. It is Mother St. Athanasius, the Superior, who has labored on the arduous mission ten years; it is the pale and worn, yet gay and energetic Assistant, Mother St. Joseph. Here is also Mother Mary of the Incarnation, depositary, the guardian spirit of all; Mothers Ste. Croix, Anne de Ste. Cecile, Anne de Notre-Dame, Mother St. Ignatius have come in. The three lay-sisters, St. Laurence, St. Ursula and St. Michael, with the poor Indian widow, Cecile Arenhatsi, have still the company of the late "lady of the castle," Mademoiselle de Boulogne, now called Mother St. Dominic, in the kitchen below, where there is work to be done.

In the hall adjoining the community, the largest in the house, the Indian girls are in frolicsome glee. Mother Anne of the Seraphim is in their midst, when Madame de la Pel-

trie enters, and there is a general rush to be near the *Ningay*, "the dear Mother," who never comes to them without giving and receiving pleasure. "The New year is coming," they remind her, and she, with pretended gravity, does not understand the allusion; yet we know she has counted well her little seminarists, that no one may be forgotten in her loving distribution of presents on New Year's morning <sup>1</sup>.

But the hour is waning. Let us look into the French classroom, where Mother St. Clare presides at the evening recreation. It is above stairs. We have not complete lists, but we can name: the Misses de Repentigny, Misses Elizabeth and Marie Couillard, Juchereau de More, Le Tardif, Marsolet, de la Poterie, Bourdon, Hayot, Hertel, Godefroy, Misses Madeleine and Geneviève Chavigny, Porchet, Nicolet as being probably of the number. Gay and sportive as young girls can be, let them enjoy the hour, then close by prayer and a

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1.—The custom of New Year's visits, and gifts too, in these early times, has become known to us through the private Journal of the Jesuits, lately given to the public. One example will suffice, as a picture of the cordiality that reigned among the inhabitants of New France. The date we select is, "Jan. 1st, 1646. The soldiers went to salute the Governor with their guns; the inhabitants presented their compliment in a body. He was beforehand with us and came here at seven o'clock to wish us a happy New Year, addressing each of the Fathers one after another. I returned his visit after Mass. (Another time we must be beforehand with him). Mr. Giffard also came to see us. The Hospital nuns sent us a letter of compliment early in the morning; the Ursulines also, with beautiful presents, wax-candles, rosaries, a crucifix; and at dinner, two excellent pigeon-pies. I sent them two images, in enamel, of St. Ignatius and St. Francis Xavier. We gave to Mr. Giffard, the Life of Our Lord, by F. Bonnet; to Mr. des Châtelets, a little volume of Drexelius, on Eternity; to Mr. Bourdon, a telescope and compass; and to others, reliquaries, rosaries, medals, images, etc.

I went to see Mr. Giffard, Mr. Couillard and Mademoiselle de Repentigny. The Ursulines sent to beg I would come and see them before the end of the day. I went; and paid my compliments also to Madame de la Peltrie, who had sent us presents." *Journal des Jésuites*, p. 24.

preparation for communion to-morrow morning. Have they not just been told of the fervor of their little rivals, in the hall below ? If they are more privileged than these little forest-girls, who have but lately known the good God, should they be less grateful or less pious ?

The hour of silence is proclaimed by the bell at seven ; then for a half-hour are heard the grave and solemn tones of the recitation of the Divine Office. It is the evening tribute of the spouse of Christ, as the appointed organ of the Church, offering to Heaven for all creatures, a few notes of that perpetual hymn which encircles the terrestrial orb ; a hymn of adoration, praise, and love.

An hour later and all had sunk to rest within that peaceful mansion ; soon all were wrapped in the profound slumber of the first hours of the night. For

“ Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep,

“ A ready visit pays.....

“ To light on lids unsullied by a tear.”

It gently smooths the pillow for the innocent and the unworldly, for the simple child whose last act was to give her heart to God, as well as for the laborious teacher, whose last prayer had been for the welfare of her youthful charge and for the salvation of souls.

Meanwhile, the midnight hour had passed, undisturbed by dreams of an impending calamity.

Suddenly, the Sister sleeping in the children's room, is awakened as by a voice of terror crying out : “ Hasten, hasten ; wake your children, or they will be burned alive.” She leaps to her feet ; the flames were bursting through the floor into the room, where they all were sleeping. She shrieks : “ Up ! for your lives, children, fly ”—and she rushes

to the nuns' dormitory to cry: "Wake! wake! the house is on fire. Be quick, and save the children." In a moment, all are aware of the danger; the fire was upon them on all sides.

One rushes to the bell, to give warning of their peril. Mother Superior, with admirable presence of mind, seizes the keys and opens the doors. Mother Assistant and Sister St. Laurence break down the parlor-grating, to afford a way of escape for those who are on the second story. Some of the Sisters, thinking the progress of the fire may be arrested, run in the direction of the cistern for water. Mother Mary calls to them that it is in vain; they must only think of saving themselves and the children. But smoke and flames are quicker than words. The dormitory where the little ones sleep is already on fire.

Mother St. Ignatius, at the peril of her life, breaks in and hurries them out,—which is no sooner done than the floor gives way. Other Sisters seize the little innocents in their arms and bear them off to a place of safety, returning several times, regardless of the danger of perishing in the flames.

Mother Mary of the Incarnation had grasped the papers of the community, and attempted to save some clothing for the Sisters, who had all rushed from the house with the children, in their night-dresses. She was alone in the midst of the flaming mass. The fire was consuming the rooms beneath; it was devouring the timbers of the roof, over her head; and the flames were following upon her steps, as after bowing to her crucifix in submission to the holy will of God, she flew along the passage of the dormitory, leading through the parlor, to a stair-case,—the only issue now possible. Happily, it was free, although she encountered another danger from the melting bell, directly over her way. At the door, she meets the Father Superior of the Jesuits and all his household,

hurrying to the rescue. The chapel-room alone was not yet in flames. They had time to save the Blessed Sacrament, and such of the sacred vestments as were in the vestry adjoining, yet not without imminent peril.

But were all safe? Had it been possible in that brief space of time, between the first alarm and Mother Mary's egress from the house, which she measures by the length of the *Miserere*—some five or six minutes—to transport all the children to a place of safety? Had no Sister lost her way? Had no one been forgotten?—anguishing questions were these to Mother St. Athanasius, who having hastened down with a Sister to open the doors, did not know that the others had taken flight in the opposite direction. Shivering there upon the snow, she endures a mortal agony within her soul, and calls her Sisters by name,—but no one answers. Casting herself upon her knees, she invokes the aid of Heaven, she calls upon the good Angels.

At last, all are reunited around their Mother; the children and all the Sisters are safe! Poor Cecile had cast herself from a window in the third story upon the icy ground; but she was only stunned. Little Genevieve, alas! was still missing! But the good Angels were busy: Genevieve had escaped, unharmed, though found only after a two hours' search.

Now, higher and higher rise the flames, bursting through that wooden roof. The heavy timbers bend and fall with a crash. It is the brightness of mid-day on this midnight scene, while the cold, silent stars look down unmoved, upon a glowing, seething furnace, in lieu of the late happy mansion, the Ursuline Monastery.

On the cold snow-path, clustered close to keep those little children warm, the nuns are kneeling. They are silent and calm,—so calm that one of the spectators cries: "Surely,



those women have lost their senses, or they are transported with a vehement love of God ! ”

Friends surround them now, and cover them with their rough garments. They bear off the children, the little Indian girls to the nearest shelter, the French children, to their own homes. Madame de la Peltrie, in her night tunic, and bare-footed until she gets the loan of shoes and a mantle, shudders in the night air, as she hurries, with the nuns, all in a similar condition, down the street to the Jesuits' college, where they receive hospitality for the night.

In every direction were groups of French and Indians, watching, in dismay, the progress of the conflagration. Great was their compassion for the misfortune of those heroic women, who had never toiled for themselves ; and as great their admiration, beholding their angelic composure under a calamity so sudden and so terrible.

Whence had the fire originated ?—Vain but inevitable question on such occasions.

Mother Mary accounts for the disaster as follows : “ The Sister charged with the bakery had prepared the dough for baking early the next morning, and to ensure its rising had placed a pan of coals under the bread-trough, fully intending to remove it later. This was an unusual thing to do in her office, and it entirely escaped her memory.” The dreadful consequences of such forgetfulness we have seen.

Of the dispositions with which the calamity was borne, Mother Mary, writing to her son, says : “ My heart preserved its usual peace ; I felt neither grief nor anxiety, but united my will to His whose Hand has passed over us, leaving us in the state in which He was Himself at this season in the cave of Bethlehem.”

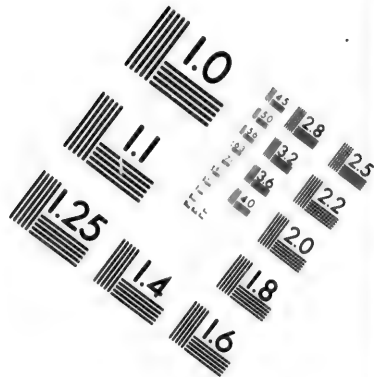
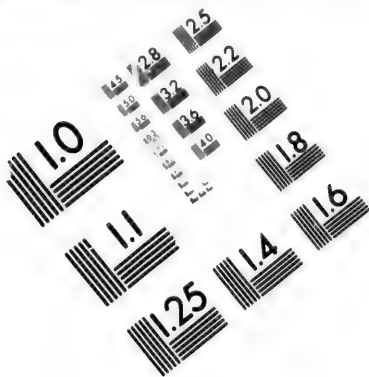
Early the next morning, the friendly nuns of the Hospital sent their steward with a pressing invitation to accept hospi-

tality with them. The Governor, on the other hand, had ordered preparations to be made for them at the Castle. The nuns were grateful to both; but preferring the monastery to the Governor's residence, they were soon in the arms of their dear sisters, the *Hospitalières*, who shed abundant tears, while they welcomed them so cordially to their home. Quickly the kind nuns brought apparel from their own wardrobe, and the whole community of Ursulines were transformed into Hospitallers, dear Madame de la Peltrie with the others.

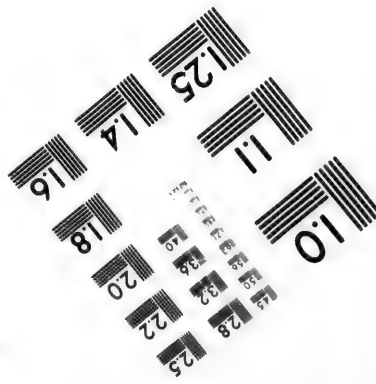
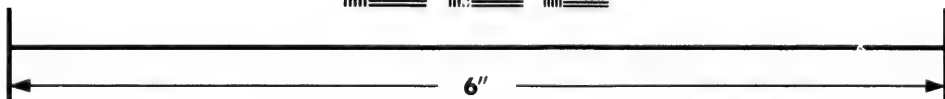
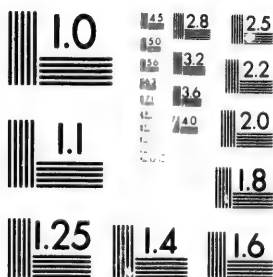
In the course of the day, the Governor, with Father Rague-neau, came to convey to the scene of the disaster, the Superior of the Ursulines, with Mother Mary of the Incarnation, Madame de la Peltrie and Mother St. Joseph.

That smoking heap of stones was a sad spectacle. There had perished, not only the fruit of ten years' solicitude and toil, but also the six months' store for themselves and their seminarists, a part of it due to the charity of their friends in France: their provisions for the rest of the winter, their clothing and beds, the furniture of their chapel and school-rooms; all, in fine, that had been provided for the service of the poor Indians, and for their own comfort and subsistence; all had been utterly consumed. Madame de la Peltrie had lost every thing as well as the nuns.

The New Year's greeting, so cordial in those early times that even to read of it is refreshing, must have given occasion to many touching expressions of sympathy. The nuns were at least, safely lodged, for the time being. Nothing that the most delicate and ingenious charity could suggest, was omitted on the part of the dear hospital Sisters, to alleviate their distress. During three weeks, with indefatigable zeal, these "friends in need" furnished materials, and aided in putting together complete suits of apparel for each of the Ursulines.



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The two communities made but one, seated at the same table, observing the same rule, and reciting the Divine Office together : but can Ursulines live without having little children around them ? Evidently not. Already the vacant house of Madame de la Peltrie has been examined, and the offer of the good foundress accepted. The nuns soon remove thither, bearing with them the generous gifts of their benefactresses ; and the not less generous loan of at least 500 livres worth of commodities, necessary for a bare commencement. They brought, above all, and bequeathed to their successors, an inexhaustible fund of gratitude for unbounded hospitality and sisterly kindness.

Among the many marks of sympathy the Ursulines received while they were the guests of the generous Hospital nuns, perhaps none touched them more than the visit of condolence from their poor Hurons. Assembled in one of the large halls of the Hospital, their chief, Louis Taiearonk, opened his harangue as follows :

“Holy Virgins : You behold here a miserable skeleton, which was one a living, happy people. Our flesh has been devoured by war and by famine. These poor bones are only held together by your benevolence and compassion. Consider our sad fate, and you will see that we have every reason to weep for ourselves a torrent of tears. Alas ! the friends that kept us from utter destruction have become like us, and their affliction renews all our distress. Must it be said that we have seen that great House of Jesus, the House of Charity, reduced to ashes in a moment ? We have seen the fire pursue, without respect, your sacred persons ! In that conflagration we beheld again our own houses, our towns and country in flames. Alas ! must the fire follow the poor Huron wherever he goes ? Weep, oh ! weep, my brethren, weep with me the misfortunes which were ours, and which have become the portion of these innocent virgins. Holy virgins : lo ! you are reduced to the same extremity as your poor Hurons, for whom your compassion was so great. You have no more a country, a home, nor a hope, but in heaven where you have placed all your desires.

We have come hither to console you, and before entering this hall, we entered your hearts to see what was your greatest affliction, in order to seek a remedy. If we were addressing persons like ourselves, our customs would lead us to offer you a present to dry your tears, and another to restore your courage ; but we see that your courage has not failed, and as to tears, you have shed none for your misfortunes. Your eyes are not fixed upon any thing lower than heaven, where you have placed your treasures.

Thus, our presents are superfluous. There is but one evil to be apprehended, and that threatens us more than you. It is the effect which the news of this deplorable accident will have upon your friends in France. They will be more touched by it than you are, and will call loudly for your return. How can a mother read without tears the letter that will tell her that her daughter is without food or clothing, bed or lodging, in fine, without any of the comforts of life ? The first thought of these poor mothers will be to recall you, that they may have the consolation of relieving your distress. A brother would do the same for his sister, an uncle for his niece. Thus we are in danger of losing you, and of being deprived of the aid we hoped to continue to enjoy, in having our daughters instructed in the Faith.

Take courage, holy virgins ! Do not suffer yourselves to be overcome by the tenderness of your relatives. Let it be seen that the charity you have for us is stronger than the ties of nature ! To fortify your resolution in this respect, here is a present (a wampum belt of twelve hundred grains) to fix your feet so firmly on the soil that no love of home or country will be able to remove them.

The second present (another belt) which we beg you to accept, is to lay the foundations of another House of Jesus, a House of Prayer, where you may again instruct our children. These are the desires of our hearts ; doubtless they are yours also ; for you would not die happy if you could reproach yourselves with having, through too tender a love for your parents, lost the opportunity of aiding to procure the salvation of so many souls, whom you love in God, and who will one day be your crown in heaven."

Doubtless, this harangue has lost, by the double translation, much of the vivid coloring it had in its native dress, yet it shows how sincere was their attachment to the faith, and to all who contributed to their instruction.

## CHAPTER X

1650-1652

## COURAGE IN ADVERSITY

Had the Ursulines been of only moderate utility to the colony, whether for aiding in converting the Indians, or in diffusing the blessings of instruction and education among the rising generation of French Canadians, the conjuncture would have been favorable to allow them to retire. Ten years were sufficient for an experiment, and had there been a want of success, the nuns themselves, after all the hardships they had endured and all the uncertainties before them, would have had a right to desist from their enterprise without being taxed with pusillanimity. The spring vessels, bringing them the usual succor, would have enabled them to defray the expenses of their passage home. That they would have been cordially welcomed by their different communities, was evident from the pressing invitations they had already received to quit the country, on account of the Indian warfare and the precarious state of the colony. These invitations were still more urgent when tidings of the conflagration of the monastery had reached their friends in France.

No one conversant with the early history of Canada is ignorant how critical was the state of affairs, and how gloomy the prospect during the years that followed the dispersion of the Hurons. The Iroquois, flushed by his success, dazzled by the fires that had consumed his victim, had not paused to rest in the solitude he had made. Throughout the land, he was busy ; here, to cut off a flying band of Hurons ; there, to scalp the trembling Algonquin ;

and everywhere to beset the French and confine them within their forts. The ubiquitous Iroquois seemed destined to remain sole master of a devastated country ; two thousand Frenchmen, scattered along the St. Lawrence, at the various settlements and trading-posts, were but a handful, compared to the Hurons destroyed — yet their means of defence were far different.

All this was well known to the nuns ; but they had determined to persevere, and share the fate of the colony whose interests they had espoused. " How could we abandon our Christian neophytes ? " says Mother Mary of the Incarnation. " They are our treasures, our spiritual children, for whom we are ready to die a million of times. And what will become of our dear French girls without instruction, without culture ? No ! we are not so cowardly as to betray our trust or abandon our post. Our enemies are powerful, but God is greater than they."

The resolution of the nuns was applauded by the public. In an assembly of the principal citizens and the Jesuit Fathers, presided by the Governor D'Ailleboust, it was decided to offer them a loan, free of interest for six years, and to aid them as far as possible in rebuilding their monastery.

Let us now return to the " Bethlehem " of the Ursulines, to take note of some of its comforts and conveniences. The mansion, built probably on the model of other small dwelling-houses of the city, was two stories high, thirty feet in length and twenty in breadth. These were narrow limits for thirteen persons, to whom a chapel and a classroom were as indispensable as a dining-room and a dormitory. Their ingenuity and their patience, having already been tasked in a similar manner, they were soon at home in their new domicile. Beds were arranged, one above



another, for themselves and for some little boarders, probably orphans ; a wooden partition screened off a little chapel. A sort of rustic cottage covered on all sides with bark, in the Huron style of building, gave them an additional classroom where they might instruct their neophytes. Their poverty, which excited universal compassion, reduced them to receive alms from such as would have been succored by them, in better days. " One would bring a towel, a chemise, or a cloak ; another presented a chicken, a few eggs, or a loaf of bread."

"The Jesuit Fathers, says Mother Mary, sent, to clothe us, the stuffs destined for their own use ; they gave us provisions, linen, and blankets for our beds. They lent us the services of their lay-brothers and their workmen, to aid in the building. The Governor also and his wife, Madame d'Ailleboust, succored us in many ways. In short, all our friends showed themselves so compassionate and obliging that we have no words sufficient to express our gratitude. If the poverty of our colonists is great, their charity is far greater."

In the mean time they sought to resume the labors of the institute, in favor of the young French girls, as well as the Indians.

The snow had not yet fully disappeared from the ground, when the nuns were seen clearing away, with their own hands, the rubbish that covered the charred foundations, in preparation for the work of the masons. On the 18th of May, in presence of the Governor and a goodly company, another corner-stone was blessed by Father Lalemant, and laid, with the usual ceremonies, by Madame de la Peltrie. All the workmen that could be obtained were employed, and the walls rose so rapidly that some hopes were entertained of inhabiting the house the following winter. \

But the short summer passed too quickly<sup>1</sup>; autumn came, and the long winter set in, before the interior of the monastery was sufficiently advanced to set at liberty the inmates of "Bethlehem's cave", pent up as they were, and stifling in smoke and unwholesome air.

The winter was indeed long and painful for many reasons. The beloved Mother St. Joseph, who for the last four years had been declining in consumption, had not yet given up teaching her dear Hurons. All summer she had kept her place in the bark-lodge, where Mother Mary accompanied her, while she continued to explain the way to serve God, to her attentive hearers, men and women, to the number of forty or fifty. Poor Indians! how they listened with open, wondering eyes, marking by expressive gestures, their assent, and their admiration of the heavenly teachings that fell from her lips! But even the supernatural energy of a soul all on fire with holy zeal, could no longer support the wasted frame, nor hush the stifling cough.

Mother St. Joseph, extended upon her humble couch, from which she was never more to rise, lingered from the second of February to the fourth of April.

The picture of that sick-room is too sad to retrace, were it not all radiant with the glow of heavenly visitors—angels of

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1—Mother Mary of the Incarnation tells us how the nuns managed to live after the burning of the convent. The spring vessels bringing them only the usual supplies when they were in need of everything, their Chaplain, M. Antoine Vignal, undertook to provide for their subsistence by cultivating their land. He took laborers with him, and set them the example, by toiling early and late. God so blessed his charity and his labor, that they harvested wheat, peas and barley in sufficient quantity for the forty persons that composed the family of that year. "We have a double team of oxen for our labor and six cows that furnish us with milk and butter." Father Vignal continued his charitable care of the community until 1657, when he joined the Sulpicians.

peace and consolation, flitting around the death-bed of a saint! That sick-room was the common dormitory; that dying-couch, one of those beds arranged in tiers as on ship-board, on which even a person in health would not comfortably repose.

Mother Mary of the Incarnation has described the scene.

"The altar where the Divine Sacrifice was offered being in the adjoining apartment, the dear sufferer could hear mass from her bed and listen to the occasional exhortations, which was a great comfort to her. On the other hand, she could see all who went to the chapel, as they must pass before her bed; she could hear the singing, the clang of the bell, the clatter of wooden shoes, the noise of the school-room, the din of the kitchen, which was in the room below, and separated from hers by a simple flooring. The odor of eels infected the whole house; the smoke forced us to open the windows, even in the coldest weather. All this incommoded her and augmented her cough, yet, far from uttering the least complaint, she would fain persuade us that it amused her.

"She even congratulated herself upon the privations she endured: Oh! how happy I am, she would say, to end my life in this poor place, deprived of the comforts and delicacies I would have enjoyed in France! Tell our good Mothers of Tours, tell my dear parents, that I die happy in the sacrifice I have made. Tell them I have never regretted coming to Canada. God has given me the promised hundred-fold in this life, and I now look forward with confidence to the crown of eternal life in the next, according to His word."

After this dying message to her dear parents and her Mothers in France, she had yet many things to say to her beloved Sisters around her. They must not fatigue themselves at the burial, nor attempt to follow out the ceremonial,

by bearing her body themselves to the place of interment. The laboring men could do that. She had a kind word of encouragement for each, and a smile that told of the utter peace of her soul.

The sacred Viaticum was brought to the dying spouse of Christ; the consoling sacrament of extreme unction administered. The last three days of her holy life were such a foretaste of heavenly bliss as effaced all impression of physical sufferings, and the separation of soul and body was gentle as the parting of the sunset glow from the summer cloud.

The funeral ceremonies were performed in the new monastery, and were attended by a great concourse both of French and Indians. Mother St. Joseph was universally esteemed, and universally regretted. The Governor, who was present at her funeral, had begged to be recommended to her prayers, with all the colony.

The Hurons may be said to have been the chief mourners; for them she had been a benefactress, a tender mother; the tidings of her death filled their hamlet with lamentations; but faithful to the pious lessons they had received, they did not fail, on the following morning, to have the *Requiem* service performed for her, on their Island (Isle of Orleans), before they came to assist at her burial.

In the garden of the Monastery, is a spot, still regarded as consecrated ground, although the mortal remains of beloved Mother St. Joseph no longer repose there. If we may there trace her epitaph, three words will suffice: INNOCENCE, FIDELITY TO GRACE, UNBOUNDED CHARITY.

Her ancestors, the feudal lords of St. Germain and Savonnières, had never been more nobly represented than in her father, M. de la Troche; her mother, Jeanne Raoul, was of the highest nobility; yet it may safely be asserted that in herself culminated the glory of an illustrious family. The sweet

odor of piety breathes from her very cradle, and her first tottering footsteps bear her on errands of charity. Idolized by her parents, and returning their love with all the tenderness of her youthful heart, Marie de la Troche, at the age of thirteen, already meditates the sacrifice of her immense wealth, her noble name, all the advantages the world offers her, in order to become the spouse of Him, who, for her love, had given His life on Calvary. By her importunities, and by arguments above her years, she triumphed over the opposition of her parents and obtained their consent to enter the novitiate of the Ursulines at Tours, where she had been placed for her education.

The postulant of fourteen was a child in years only. In judgment, in capacity, in fidelity to the duties of the religious life, she was mature as a person of thirty. At sixteen, she pronounced her vows with the fervor of one who fully appreciated the grace of her vocation.

Her fidelity in the discharge of her duties in the schools, her piety, her engaging modesty and unaffected gravity, rendered her the model of her companions and the delight of her superiors. Her zeal for the salvation of souls, which had manifested itself from her tender infancy, was an undying flame, enkindled in her soul in order to consume every other affection. This zeal was the principle of her vocation for Canada, and of the courage which sustained her in the midst of such labors and hardships as attended her here.

Her first apostolate for the conversion of the poor Indians was that of prayer—uniting herself in spirit with the missionaries, and offering her labors and sufferings to God in their behalf. Her desire to devote herself to their instruction, she had regarded as chimerical, until the moment when the way was opened so providentially. Her demand to be allowed to accompany Mother Mary of the Incarnation, was

met by an intimation to be in readiness to take the office of another Sister who would be appointed to go. But neither the opposition of her community, unwilling for many reasons to part with her, nor the justly expected refusal of her parents to consent to her going, disturbed the equanimity of her generous soul. Confiding in the protection of St. Joseph, she awaited the result of the deliberations of the various parties interested. That result, as we know already, was most fortunate for the foundation of the Ursulines of Quebec.

Next to the name of Mother Mary of the Incarnation, that of Mother St. Joseph is dear to their hearts. They can never forget that the first of her three constant demands to Heaven, was—"The sanctification of her community;" the second was "The conversion of all the pagan nations of America;"—the third "the preservation and prosperity of the French colony in Canada."

In connexion with the name of Mother St. Joseph, we are happy to enable our readers to form a more intimate acquaintance with this beloved "elder sister" of the Ursuline family of the Old Monastery, through a letter—the only one known to exist—which has lately come into our possession<sup>1</sup>. This letter was written to congratulate Mother Mary of the Incarnation's son, Claude Martin, for having like his mother and herself, chosen the "better part" by entering the novitiate of the Benedictines. At the same time we discover the kindness of her heart when she informs him, in terms as delicate as the act itself, of the

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1—Rev. Léon Chapot who has written an admirable Life of Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation—searching through the old manuscripts of the National Library (Paris) for letters of Dom Claude Martin, whose life, he purposes to write, discovered this treasure and sent us a fac-simile of the original, which will be carefully preserved in our archives.

friendship and protection she has procured for him in her own family. The letter is headed by the holy names :

*" Jesus, Mary, Joseph.*

" My dear brother,

" Your good mother and mine, having allowed me to write a few lines in her letter to you, I cannot commence better than by congratulating you on the happy choice you have made of the religious state, and I assure you that I have felt on this occasion, as much consolation as if you were my own brother. I am certain that you already experience how "sweet is the Lord to those who love Him," and that "one day passed in His courts is better than a thousand passed in the tents of sinners." Enjoy your happiness, my dear brother, while I bless a thousand times our good God who has bestowed it upon you, and who has touched your heart and attracted it so forcibly. Well may you now ever "sing the mercies of the Lord" who has caused "your lot and your share to fall in so good a place."

" How great and how noble is your inheritance, since it raises you to the most excellent dignity of the children of God, and makes you esteem all the riches of the world as dust and ashes, compared to the riches of the poverty of Jesus Christ. I beseech Him, most earnestly, to bless and perfect the gifts and the graces which He has bestowed upon you, and to grant you perseverance. I pray for this even as I pray for my own salvation, but in case the austerities of the rule you have embraced, should surpass your strength and oblige you to return to the world, I beg and conjure you, my dear brother, not to have recourse to any one but my mother for the assistance you may need or to obtain a position or employment.

" I have her word that she will be as a mother to you, and that she will have the same care of you as if you were her son. She wrote me this assurance by the last ship, in answer to a request I made her a year ago on account of its having been reported to your good mother that there was no one to provide for you. At the same time she has made it her duty to seek a good situation for you in some office with my uncle the Bishop of Xinte. If the situation is not as brilliant as the place which the Duchess d'Aiguillon

offered you, it will, at least, aid you as much towards your salvation. But our Lord, has seen fit to provide for you Himself in a much better manner. May men and angels forever bless Him for His goodness.

"If I have told you this it is to show you the watchful care of divine Providence in your regard, and how for one mother whom God has taken from you, He has provided several others who have really inherited her affection for you. I shall say only one word of her, which is, that I consider you most happy to be the son of so holy a mother. I have no doubt of its being the richest title which Heaven could bestow upon your birth; a title which will bring you a thousand graces and blessings.

"I wish as many of these blessings for you as for myself, being most cordially in Jesus,

My dear brother,

Your very humble and obliged servant,

SEUR MARIE DE ST-JOSEPH, R. U. Q."

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## CHAPTER XI

1652 - 1665

### THE SECOND MONASTERY

After a residence of fifteen months in the house of Madame de la Peltrie, the Ursulines were enabled to remove to their new convent. Mother Mary, with that wise forethought which marked all her plans, had provided additional classrooms by extending the walls to the length of one hundred and eight feet, instead of ninety-two.

The nuns removed on the vigil of Pentecost. As usual, the whole population of Quebec took part in the rejoicings.



On the morning of Pentecost Sunday, a procession from the parish church,—priests in glittering cope and stole, youths in the white robe of the acolyte, citizens in holiday attire, came singing hymns befitting the occasion, to transport the Blessed Sacrament from the lowly altar where it had rested for the last fifteen months, to the tabernacle prepared in the new convent for its reception. During three days, the clergy and people came in similar order to sing High Mass in the new chapel, where there was exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for the *Quarant' Ore*. To all the country, the rebuilding of the monastery and the opening of the schools on a larger scale, was a subject of joy and congratulation ; while men of business, aware of the difficulties and cost of such a work, wondered to see it accomplished in so short a period.

Once more Mother Mary and her companions were at liberty to give full scope to their zeal. The bark cabin might be torn down ; the shade of the great *ash-tree*<sup>1</sup>, destined to perpetuate the memory of the holy teachings in the open air, might—unless from choice—be abandoned. At all hours, a more secure shelter would protect them, while they continue the two-fold labor of their institute, never forgetting that the best means to benefit the souls of others, is to aim daily at a closer union with God by charity and self-sacrifice.

The seminarists continued to occupy the house of Madame de la Peltrie. The French population was not yet numerous, but there was a rising generation, as the *Relations* testify, (1653) of "fine, healthy children."

This explains what Mother Mary states of the institute at this period : "After the restoration of our Monastery" she

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1—Our readers will find, the "Old ash-tree" depicted, as it appeared in 1842, in a View of the Convent, at another page.—Our annals confirm the traditions relative to the identity of this tree, which finally disappeared in 1868, as will be mentioned later.

writes, "our pupils became more numerous in proportion to our accommodations. In fact, we have been, at times, overcharged, and I have seen myself, to my great regret, forced to refuse many; the poor parents, retiring with tears in their eyes, while I wept in my heart. It is indeed a miracle that we have been able to subsist."

When we reflect how well the good Mother understood the art of providing for a large family, with very narrow resources, we may easily form some estimate of the number of pupils. The zeal of the colonists for the education of their children need not be frustrated by the scarcity of money. The usual barter of the country will do, for the nuns required "*fire-wood, butter, pork, salted-eels, corn, vegetables, &c.*," although they cultivate as much land as possible, under the charitable direction of their chaplain.

From the Journal of the Jesuits, already cited, we learn that, in 1660, forty children made their first communion at the parish church, twenty of whom had been placed at the convent by the bishop, for the usual preliminary instructions. From this number of children within the limits of the city, nearly of the same age, it is reasonable to infer that the French pupils under the care of the Ursulines at this period were numerous: the usual proportion of children for their first communion is not one fourth of those sent to school.

The education of those times, without embracing the diversified programme required by the customs of the present day, was perhaps the more favorable to the development of the superior faculties of the mind. The rules for the institute which were printed at that date<sup>1</sup> and followed, required the pupils to be taught reading and grammar, the Christian doc-

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1—In the first Ursuline Convent, Paris.

trine and sacred history, practical arithmetic, penmanship and needlework.

The requirements of modern systems of education were unknown in the 17th century, nor were they yet fashionable in Louis XIV, or Queen Anne's time.

In preparation for the instruction of the Huron seminarists, Mother Mary of Incarnation had commenced the study of their language, two years before Mother St. Joseph's death. Their classes, therefore, did not suffer, and we hear of "good seminarists" who are "pious and devout," who are so "well advanced that they are able to aid in the classes, teaching their companions to read and to write: able also, to make their clothes and keep the house in order." Finally, we hear of several "who begged to be received into the novitiate; but as the nuns always put them off, they understood, at last, that they could not always remain in the same place; they longed for the woods, yet left the convent with regret<sup>1</sup>." "We have not sense enough, they said, to live like you;" they might have said, God has given us hearts to love Him, but not lungs to breathe the air of cities. Like those wild and yet beautiful flowers, the Orchis tribe, that thrive in the clefts of rocks, at the base of the overhanging precipice, in the solitude of the forest glade, but fade and die when transplanted to the garden and treated to a rich soil: so our native American tribes faded and were short-lived, in proportion as they were deprived of the air and life of the great forests, which for so many ages had been the home of the redman.

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1—Letters of Mother Mary of the Incarnation, and Relations 1653, 4, 1655-1658.

The Hospital nuns received one into their novitiate, but she only lived to receive the habit and to pronounce her vows on her death-bed. A few others have been received into the different communities of Canada but all died young.

Besides the direct object of instruction, the monastery was the ordinary refuge for the Indian girls, whenever their parents were unable to protect them.

Sometimes it was an orphan, that the relatives could not provide for; sometimes a babe of some months, which the nuns were offered because the mother was dead, or that two of the same age were burdensome. More than once, a poor widow, with tearful eyes, begged for the protecting shelter of the convent, and was not refused. Mother Mary seems to have had a special compassion, and a special care for widows and orphans.

With the latter she was most successful in forming them to all the usages of civilized life. Some of these seminarists, really intelligent and accomplished, became the wives of respectable Frenchmen. Mr. Boucher, afterwards governor of Three Rivers, married a seminarist.

Another enterprise had been undertaken, in 1656, as if in anticipation of the presence of the chief Pastor. It was a church, adjoining the convent, commenced by the unwearied friend of the Ursulines, Madame de la Peltrie.

The pious widow, who without the consolation of an irrevocable engagement in the service of her Divine Master, persevered in the humble and retired life she had embraced in the community, had long nourished the project of building a "House to the Lord"—thus she designated the church she had in contemplation. While the nuns were engaged in rebuilding the monastery, she had commenced amassing the necessary funds. Her annual income, much diminished by the law-proceedings of her relatives, only permitted her to begin in 1656. The governor, M. de Lauzon, invited to lay the corner-stone, had assisted at vespers with his suite, in the little chapel of the monastery, on the feast of the Ascension. The Office of the Church concluded, the Superior of

the Jesuits and other ecclesiastics, proceeded to the spot selected for the foundation. The stone, inscribed with the sacred names—Jesus, Mary, Joseph—was blessed by Father LeMercier; the Governor, with his silver trowel, performed the part assigned him in the ceremony, while all the cloistered family looked on with pleasing anticipations.

Two years and a half later (Jan. 6, 1659), "the chapel was solemnly blessed <sup>1</sup> by the Superior of the Jesuits; the Blessed Sacrament was transported to the new altar, leaving the apartments which had hitherto served for prayer and the divine Sacrifice, free to be employed as class-rooms or for other purposes.

At the close of this period of thirteen years (1665), we find the Ursulines had augmented their number of teachers in the institute, by receiving several subjects formed in their classes. Although the Indian race had greatly diminished throughout the country since the first arrival of the nuns—cut off by sickness <sup>2</sup> and the unsparing arms of the Iroquois,—there were still the sedentary Indians of Sillery, whose daughters, from the first, were instructed in the convent; there were also the Hurons, who, since they had been transferred from the Island of Orleans to Quebec (1658), and lodged near the *Château St. Louis*, sent their children daily for instruction, to the number of sixty or eighty. These, as in former times, had their daily mess of *sagamité*, after their school was over.

During the winter of 1662, Mother Mary was surrounded by a class of novices, eager to render themselves useful, and

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<sup>1</sup>—*Journal des Jésuites*.

<sup>2</sup>—"Sickness,"—among the Indians.—For Europeans, the country was remarkably healthy. During thirty-two years, only two deaths had occurred in the community.

to avail themselves of her knowledge of the Indian languages. For their benefit and for the use of the other nuns, she composed at that time, a catechism in Huron, three in Algonquin, and a large dictionary, French and Algonquin. With all this labor for the Indian race, writing in 1664, she says: "We are still more occupied in the classes for the French children, and, it is certain that if God had not sent the Ursulines to Canada, they would be left to the most deplorable ignorance. All the young girls in the country pass through our hands, and this causes piety and religion to flourish everywhere. The French population, rapidly increasing, our employments must keep pace with that increase."

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## CHAPTER XII

1652-1665

### THE NOVITIATE

ARRIVAL OF BISHOP LAVAL

The secret of a religious vocation is, for many, a mystery unfathomable: but in vain would they seek, in the circle of human passions, the motive for embracing a state, whose first obligation is to curb those passions. By what standard can the wordly-minded, the unbelieving, judge of actions that arise from motives superior to nature? No; they are incapable of forming a just estimate in these matters; and from false premises, necessarily draw false conclusions. They study the phenomenon from their own level, and setting up a caricature, call it a true portrait. Ambition, pride, self-love—at

best religious enthusiasm—they cannot mount to higher motives. But when has pride or ambition prompted one to reduce himself to be the servant of the poor, the orphan, or the savage? Self-love is not so blind as to seek admirers in the wilderness, nor so courageous as to endure long years of abnegation and utter self-sacrifice<sup>1</sup>. As to religious enthusiasm, it may excite to rash enterprises, but it is insufficient to ensure perseverance; the fire invariably burns out, and leaves its possessor weaker than before.

The true motive of a religious vocation, especially for the active Orders, is CHARITY,—that supreme love of God which hears with joy the injunction: "Take up they Cross and follow me;"—believing in the promised "hundred-fold in this world, and eternal life in the next"; believing also the words of our Saviour: "Whatsoever ye have done to the least of these, ye have done unto me." Without this supernatural motive, in a greater or less degree, there can be no true religious vocation.

But it is time to return from this digression. The value of the labors of our first Ursulines to society is sufficiently evident; but how will their work be perpetuated? Will the wild soil of Canada be found productive of plants fit to be transferred to the "Garden enclosed" of the Celestial Bridegroom? Yet, why should we not expect to find the lily and the rose blossoming under the shadow of the Cross? In an atmosphere, redolent of the purest Christianity, there could not be a dearth of vocations for the cloister.

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1.—The present century will have to record other heroic examples of self-sacrifice; and none more resembling that of the first Ursulines and Hospital nuns of Canada than the recent establishment for the poor savages of the river McKenzie, by the courageous Sister Lapointe and her little community, the daughters of Madame d'Youville.

We have seen that three novices had been received before the burning of the convent; Miss Barré and Miss de Boulogne were natives of France; Catherine Lezeau, a lay-sister, was the first Canadian novice.

In 1652, Miss Genevieve Bourdon, at the age of fourteen, hears the mysterious call, and turning away from the world she was just entering, she begs to be permitted to embrace the religious state. The Honorable *Procureur Général*, her father, was of that class of men, whose worth is superior to any station. The refuge of the poor, the protector of the widow and the orphan, he was a man of prayer, leading an interior life, such as is the aim of the monk in his cell, or the nun in her cloister. Such a man would not refuse to part with his daughter, when it was to give her to God<sup>1</sup>.

Genevieve, on taking the veil<sup>2</sup>, adopts the name of St. Joseph, purposing, no doubt, while placing herself under the protection of that glorious Saint, to imitate the holy nun who had lately borne the name with so much edification to the community.

In 1658, a younger sister, Miss Anne Bourdon, at the age of fourteen, enters the novitiate of the Ursulines: after her veiling she is known as Mother Anne of St. Agnes.

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1—Miss Marguerite Bourdon, the eldest of the family, and her younger sister Mary, entered also the religious state, among the nuns of the Hospital in Quebec.

2—The *Journal des Jésuites*, published under the supervision of the Reverend Messrs. Laverdière and Casgrain, has furnished details particularly precious for the history of the Monastery: "Dec. 9th, 1652. Genevieve Bourdon takes the veil at the Ursulines. Father Bagueneau, Superior, officiates; Father J. Lalemant says the Mass, and Father Chatelain gives the sermon.

Madame d'Ailleboust and Mme Bourdon, enter the convent and dine with the nuns. The Governor, Mr. d'Ailleboust and Mr. Bourdon dine in our refectory (the latter had furnished the dinner.) At table were also Rev. M. de St. Sauveur and Rev. A. Vignal, Chaplain of the Ursulines. *Journal des Jésuites*."



These two angelic young girls have not become nuns "to pine away and die." O no! Mother St. Joseph lives to celebrate the forty-seventh anniversary of her profession, having filled all the offices of the community, except that of superior. She was oftenest employed at class, where her vigilance, her zeal, her tender piety, rendered her services invaluable.

Mother Anne of St. Agnes was very precious to her community, which she was called to govern, later, after those venerable Mothers who had directed her in the paths of perfection had been called to their reward.

This is not the place to enter into further details of the piety, the rare intelligence, the rich endowments of this first Canadian Superior, whose memory still appeals to the gratitude of the community. She lived to the age of seventy.

Miss Mary Boutet de St. Martin, in religion Mother St. Augustine, who pronounced her vows at seventeen, and lived to renew the fortieth anniversary of her profession, was chiefly employed in the institute, for which her talents adapted her in a special manner. Proposing to herself our Saviour in His hidden life, as her model, she had a special preference for all the laborious and obscure offices, aiding the lay-sisters, sweeping, and taking care of the little Indian girls.

The following year, the novitiate received another acquisition in the person of Miss Jeanne Godefroy, who had been a pupil in the convent from the tender age of six years. She was one of those little pupils who, on the last night of December 1650, were driven from their beds at a moment's warning, to stand shivering on the snow, while the fire was consuming the monastery. Her father, Mr. John Godefroy of Linctot in Normandy, was one of the earliest settlers of Three Rivers.

To realize the perils that surrounded these pioneers in the colonization of Canada, we have only to read the tragic fate of six members of our novice's family. Five of her ten brothers were killed in different encounters with the Iroquois; her uncle, Thomas Godefroy, was taken prisoner and burned by those barbarians, whose aim was the total extermination of the French settlers.

A man capable of maintaining his post, and aiding in such circumstances to fix the French name upon the soil, might well be remembered by the "*Grand Roy*" in his distribution of titles of nobility among the most worthy of his Canadian subjects. His family obtained these titles in 1688.

Returning to our novice, who took the name of St. Francis Xavier, we shall offer here, a picture of the times, in a few lines from our annals:—"Our little pupil, from the age of six years, was remarkable for the precocity of her intelligence, her happy memory, her brilliant talents. She made rapid progress in learning her catechism, sacred history, and the other studies suited to her age. In these early times, the Fathers of the Society of Jesus used to give public instructions on Sundays, at which all our boarders assisted. To excite emulation among them, they were allowed to learn dialogues, or verses on sacred subjects. Miss Godefroy was the one who oftenest carried off the prize for application and success."

Bishop Laval gave her the veil at the age of sixteen. From that day forward, she never deviated from the path of perfection upon which she had entered.

Mother St. Francis Xavier was one of those young Sisters, so ardent to learn the Indian languages, as we have seen in 1662. Her biographical notice would lead us too far, while it would show us this fervent Ursuline, practising the sweet virtues of charity and humility, preserving the candor and

gaiety of her childhood, passing through the laborious offices of depositary, novice-mistress and mistress-general of the boarding school.

Another youthful aspirant to the religious life from Three Rivers, enters in 1665. It is Angelique Poisson, daughter of the seignior of Gentilly. Her vocation was as precocious as that of the Misses Bourdon; and her *eloquence*, like theirs, enabled her to triumph over the opposition of her mother, her only surviving parent. She entered the novitiate in her fifteenth year, to serve the community and edify it to the age of seventy-nine. The annalist of the convent, tracing a notice of this beloved Mother Angelique Poisson of St. John the Evangelist, who died in the office of Superior, makes us share her admiration of a life so pure, so fervent, so replete with edification during the space of sixty-four years, which she had passed in the faithful observance of the rule and the obligations of the religious state.

These are the five first-fruits of the grace of a religious vocation for the Ursulines in the New World. Won by the sweet attractions of grace, they turned away from home and kindred, to serve God more faithfully, living in Him by a life of prayer and recollection, laboring for Him in purity of intention, in singleness of heart. Their death was in peace, and their memory is blessed: who shall say that their sacrifice was in vain, or their choice unwise?

Meanwhile, the little community which from the first year of its foundation was formed of subjects professed in the two Congregations of Paris and of Bordeaux, had adopted Regulations, founded on mutual concessions, drawn up by Mother Mary of the Incarnation with such wisdom, that it met the approval of ecclesiastical authority, as well as of their respective congregations in France.

Three candidates had been admitted, and had pronounced their vows under the authority of Father Jerome Lalemant, Vicar General and Superior of the two communities of Quebec,—a charge which he continued to exercise even after the arrival of a bishop, and which he only resigned with his life, in 1672.

MONSEIGNEUR JEAN FRANÇOIS DE LAVAL

Great were the rejoicings in Canada at the arrival of a Bishop, the Vicar Apostolic of New France, "He was received, says a writer of those days, as an angel of consolation sent from Heaven. He had come to gather up the precious drops of the Blood of Jesus, with the generous resolve not to spare his own, but to labor in every possible way for the conversion of the poor Indians." This noble scion of the house of Montmorency, Jean François de Laval, was destined to a long and holy career in Canada. Mother Mary wrote of him soon after his arrival, as follows: "He is a man of superior merit and singular virtue, whose abilities are of the highest order. He is above all human respect, zealous for the progress of religion and every good work. His manner of life is so exemplary that every one is in admiration; in short, he is a man chosen by Heaven, an apostle worthy of all possible consideration."

In the prolonged uncertainty of a bishop's appointment to this distant see, no provision had been made for his accommodation; the nuns were therefore happy to offer him the house of Madame de la Peltrie. "We shall be incommoded certainly, writes Mother Mary, by placing our seminarists in our class-rooms, but we shall suffer the inconvenience joyfully on such an occasion. The Bishop will have the enjoyment of a fine garden. We have put up a high paling, that all may be according to the rules of the cloister." Elsewhere it

is noted that a postulant, Miss Jeanne Godefroy, of Three Rivers, who had entered the novitiate a few weeks after the arrival of the bishop, takes the veil in October, with the name of Sister Louisa of St. Francis. The eminent Prelate presides at the ceremony, gives the sermon, and presents the novice a purse to pay the cost of her religious costume. During the two years of the Bishop's residence in the house of Madame de la Peltrie, the nuns had the consolation of assisting at the holy Sacrifice which he celebrated daily in their new church, when his presence was not required at the parish church or elsewhere, by a festival or some particular function.

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## CHAPTER XIII

1655 - 1665

### THE URSULINES AND THE IROQUOIS

#### CIVILIZATION OF THE INDIANS

Would the Iroquois ambassadors at Quebec in 1655 and '56, fail to visit the House of Jesus and the holy virgins, so much talked of by their Huron captives? And would the Ursulines, with their experience of such interviews, fail to seize the occasion to speak of the "great Creator of all things" to their swarthy visitors?

Mother Mary tells us how the sachem, Teharihogen, and all his company, eighteen stalwart braves, were received at the convent, and twice regaled splendidly. The seminarists were a wonder to them, especially to see them cared for and cherished so tenderly by the nuns, to whom they were, by nature, strangers.

Marie Arinadsit who, at the age of eleven, writes in French as well as in Huron, and sings hymns in three languages, is a prodigy, and their admiration has no bounds after she has taught a class of Huron girls in their presence. Marie profits of the occasion to harangue the sachem. She makes him the present of a wampum belt to invite him to send the little Iroquois girls to the convent, and promises to treat them as if they were her sisters.

Another day, a female sachem comes with all her suite. Marie recommences with the same success. Mother Mary of the Incarnation has repeated interviews with Magdalen and her companions. Before they leave Quebec, their faith is firm, and they are sufficiently instructed to be baptized. The ceremony takes place in the convent chapel. "Oh! what a glad *Te Deum* was sung on that occasion. Thankful hearts exulted to see the persecutors of Christianity become the children of God." The ambassadors and the new Christians, on their way home, met a large number of their nation, men and women, at Montreal, and told them so much of the nuns and their "seminarists", that another band came on, impelled by no other motive but to see the "sights" at Quebec. They also were welcomed at the convent. The women were admitted to the class-rooms of the seminarists, to be regaled and entertained like the former visitors.

The nuns were delighted with the females of that nation whose warriors were a terror to the country. Mother Mary pronounces them the gentlest creatures in the world, and often expresses the wish to see a class of young Iroquois girls in her convent. This wish was destined to be fulfilled, as we shall see later. The noble Magdalen, who has come so far to be instructed and baptized, might herself be considered as the first seminarist.

This fervent Christian, returning to her country with Mother Mary's holy words still ringing in her heart, proved faithful to the graces she had received. To aid the missionary, Father Dablon, in acquiring the language, she remains hours by his side, a willing and patient teacher. She is a missionary herself. Fearless of the ridicule and contempt to which she is exposed by filling an office considered unworthy of her rank, she goes daily from cabin to cabin to call the Christians to prayer. She sings at mass with the Huron captives, and in all things lives up to the teachings of her religion. When Father Chaumonot writes, she begs him to tell Mother Mary of the Incarnation that she will ever be faithful to prayer, and renews her promise to send her sister to the convent. At a later period, when persecuted by her unbelieving relations, her faith never wavered, and her death was as consoling as her life had been edifying.

While the fearless missionaries were in the midst of the Iroquois country, an assembly was held in which the Ursulines took part through the missionaries, who spoke for them, offering a present, in the style of the country, to invite the Indian braves to send their daughters to the convent.

But the pagan Iroquois was the personification of deceit and treachery. Five years<sup>1</sup> after the visit of the ambassadors, alluded to above, the Iroquois were again expected at the convent but not as friendly visitors. The monastery had become a fortress, not merely by a figure of speech, in the Indian style, but in reality.

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1—This interval of five years was one of alternate hope and anxiety throughout the colony. The Iroquois, having dispersed the Neutral nation and destroyed the Eries, were still pursuing, under treacherous pretexts of friendship, the Algonquins and the remnant of the Hurons. The reader will not expect to find here details regarding these wars—which properly belong to the history of Canada.

This episode, which belongs to the year 1660, must not be omitted. No one had forgotten the hostile flotilla, which had passed under the very cannons of the fort (1656), to fall upon the Hurons on the Island of Orleans, killing some and bearing off nearly a hundred into captivity. This daring act was achieved by the Mohawks, the most intractable of all the Iroquois tribes.

Large bodies of these fierce marauders were threatening the French settlements. Hamlets were pillaged and burned, whole families were cut off. A prisoner, taken by the French, revealed the plans of his countrymen, declaring that an army of eight hundred or more was pressing on, to surprise Quebec. "Let us cut off the head," said they, "then we shall have easy work of the members. Let us strike Ononchio." The enemy was not farther off than Three Rivers. No time was to be lost. The danger from these barbarians was thought to be so imminent that the Bishop came for the Ursulines, and conducted them with their pupils to the Jesuits' buildings, which had been prepared as a fortress. The Hospital nuns were provided for with the same solicitude. Mother Mary of the Incarnation, ever intrepid in the hour of danger, remained with three of her nuns, not to leave the house at the mercy of the soldiers. Every morning, at six o'clock, the nuns returned to their respective convents, which the soldiers guarded, and which were rapidly transformed into fortresses. The windows were walled up to the middle and provided with beams and loop-holes. Redoubts were erected in various directions, the only egress left free was a postern-gate with its turnstile.

Add to this, two guard-houses, regularly mounted by a guard of twenty-four resolute men, to whom were associated, at night, for the out-posts, twelve French blood-hounds and we shall have some idea of the martial air of the monastery



during eight days of that month of June. The fortifications were maintained during five months, but the inmates of the monastery were left undisturbed.

Once there was a sudden alert. The Iroquois were certainly in sight. In less than half an hour, every thing was in readiness to give them a terrible reception: Mother Mary and her aids had distributed the ammunition; every soldier was at his post. Happily, it was a false alarm, no enemy appeared. Later, it was known that the colony had been saved by the heroic devotion of Dollard and his seventeen companions, with a party of Hurons from Quebec, who within their little fort, had so weakened an army of seven hundred Iroquois that they came no farther.

Another of the Venerable Mother's letters shews us the state of the colony in the fall of 1660. Her appreciations are, as usual, just, and her resolutions full of intrepidity. She writes: "Father Lejeune has gone to France to demand succor; it is to be hoped His Majesty will not refuse it. If these barbarians are not humbled, they will destroy the colony. There is no assurance in their treaties of peace, which they only make in order to gain time. Our Frenchmen and Christian Indians, taken prisoners last spring, have been put to death with horrible torments—their limbs mutilated, their flesh cut to pieces; finally they were burnt in a slow fire. The last one who was tormented thus, threw himself on his knees each time that a joint of his fingers was cut off, to thank God and bless Him for his sufferings.

"While the country is in this deplorable state, perhaps our Mothers will be anxious about us and wish to have us return to France. Should this be the case, do your best, my dear son, to prevent it. We are not afraid. Although the intention of our enemies is to destroy us, I have a firm confidence that the design of God is to ensure the stability

of the colony, and to render this new Church victorious over her enemies. Adieu for this year."

Once more the words of our Venerable Mother prove prophetic. The ruin of the country, prevented in 1660 by the heroic sacrifice of Dollard and his followers, was still the object of the Iroquois warriors in their frequent and bloody incursions, while awaiting an opportunity for a general attack. On the other hand, the liquor traffic, so unscrupulously pursued by the traders, was undermining the very bases of faith and morality among the converted Indians, when once more the Hand of God was seen providing a remedy for all these evils. An extraordinary heaving and disruption of the soil, in a continued series of earthquakes and other strange phenomena, sent a wholesome alarm into the consciences of the prevaricators, while on the other hand, the king of France was inspired with better counsel for the government of Canada.

The voice of the holy Bishop Laval had prevailed. A new governor, disposed to put salutary laws in force, was named, and a Viceroy appointed to settle the affairs of the distracted colony, as well as to humble and punish the hostile Iroquois, with whom no treaty of peace could be lasting. In 1665, by the united efforts of the Viceroy and M. Talon the Royal Intendant, the expedition against these ferocious enemies was successful, and was followed by a period of comparative peace and security.

Thus was it given to our Venerable Mother to witness, during the last years of her laborious career, the removal of the chief obstacle to the prosperity of her dear adopted country and to the spread of Christianity.

It was an act of policy in the French monarch, no doubt, as well as of benevolence, when in 1668, he signified to his

lieutenants in New France, that the Indians should be civilized. It would be the means of assuring their welfare, while it would consolidate his power, forming of all those nations one vast empire. But, was the project of civilizing the aborigenes of America practicable? During half a century the missionaries had converted thousands to the Faith. They could say: "Experience has proved that the Indians are as capable as the most civilized nation in Europe, of understanding and practising all that relates to piety and the service of God. They are perfectly instructed in the Christian doctrine. They know the ordinary prayers of a Christian, the commandments of God and of the Church; they approach the sacraments with piety and edification. Even children of the most tender age are susceptible of the impressions of faith." Thus writes Father Fremin, in 1669, in reference to the Mohawks. In all the preceding years, the *Relations* render similar testimonies with regard to the other Indians of North America.

"The Gospel knows no distinction of Greek or barbarian, bond or free." The converted Indian, retaining the rude blanket and moccasin, the wigwam for his home, and hunting for his profession, is no less the child of God and an heir of heaven than the trader to whom he sells his furs, or the gentleman of rank and education who wears them.

Mother Mary of the Incarnation, like the missionaries, had already formed her opinion, grounded on experience. She pictures the liberty of the Indian mode of life, "which is so delightful to those who are accustomed to it, that it requires almost a miracle to detach them from it. It is far easier, she says, for a Frenchman to become a savage, than for a savage to adopt the customs of civilized nations."

But the project of civilizing the Indians having received the royal sanction, the experiment must be fairly tested. Bishop Laval had been too long in the country to have much confidence in its success, but in compliance with the royal will, he received six Huron boys into his seminary, to be brought up with the French students. The Jesuit Fathers took other boys into their college. The Intendant Talon, placed five young Iroquois girls at the convent for a similar purpose. On this subject Mother Mary says: "If it be the will of our Sovereign, we shall undertake the task through obedience and for the glory of God. Nevertheless it is a very difficult thing, if it is not an impossibility, to civilize them. We have more experience on this head than any one else, and we freely avow that of the great number whom we have instructed, we have hardly civilized one in a hundred. We have found them docile and intelligent, but they have not the constancy to remain with us after a certain time. They must see the woods. They must follow their parents to the chase, and they find more pleasure in their wigwams than in our fine houses. It is the nature of the Indian; he cannot submit to constraint. If deprived of his usual liberty, he becomes melancholy, and sadness makes him sick. Besides, the Indians are excessively fond of their children, and if they see them sad, upon no consideration will they leave them in that state. We have had them of different nations, Hurons, Algonquins and Iroquois; these are the most comely and the most docile; but are they more susceptible of being civilized? Will they retain the polished manners, and the customs in which we are bringing them up? I do not expect it, for they are of the Indian race and that is sufficient."

This verdict of Mother Mary of the Incarnation has been sanctioned now by the experience of more than two hundred

years. The Indians, as a race, have not entered into the category of civilized nations. Those who live in the neighbourhood of the whites, enjoy more of the comforts of life ; but, unfortunately, they adopt the vices rather than the virtues of civilized man. In his vicinity, especially, they seem destined to an inevitable decrease in population, which has already ended, in many cases, in the extinction of a people. In Christianity alone, the Indian has been found susceptible of "progress," capable of "improvement," and even of attaining a high degree of moral excellence. Many among these simple-hearted people have exclaimed, like the saintly Catherine Tehgahkwita: "Who will teach me what is most agreeable to God that I may do it?" The results of the labors of the missionaries, as well as those of the nuns within the limits of their sphere, were great, certainly, since by imparting to these poor people the knowledge of the true God, and providing them with the means of salvation, they opened heaven to many thousands of immortal souls.

Nor were these results confined to the period in which they were achieved. All over the continent, the Indian races have been found more accessible to Christianity from the time of the first converted tribes. There are still in Lower Canada, seven Indian villages, protected by the government, having schools and chapels ; they are not excluded by the law nor by any prejudice against them, from any calling or profession ; but to this day, where are their learned men, their men of business ? We may seek them without finding one in a thousand,—if we may not better say one in ten thousand. Yet it is well known that Indian tribes, at a distance from the settlements of the whites, if visited by a missionary a few times during the year, readily become good Christians

and are most faithful to the law of God <sup>1</sup>. They learn to read and write; they know how to sing and pray. They ignore the vices as well as the enjoyments of civilized life, and in that ignorance find their security and their happiness.

Our readers will not expect, then, to hear that the Ursulines succeeded, after 1668, in forming *young ladies* of the young Indian girls. No! but, in one sense, they did more; they formed them to piety, to the virtues of our holy religion; they sought not to unfit them for that manner of life for which nature had formed them.

There are always exceptions to general rules. Some of the pupils, as already mentioned, were susceptible of all the polish desirable in society. Several respectable Canadian families may reckon among their ancestors some of these Indian maidens, educated in the convent.

One of the last letters that have been preserved of Mother Mary (1670) mentions "a fine band of Indian girls, of four different nations; Iroquois, Algonquins, Abenakis, and Montagnais." "They are our consolation and our delight, she says, by their docility, rendering our labors so light that we would not exchange them for all the kingdoms of the earth."

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1—The worthy missionary of the Montagnais of the Saguenay, Father Arnaud, O. M. I., who has attended them as pastor for the last twenty-two years, attributes to their being well instructed in the Christian doctrine and morals, and to their unfrequent intercourse with the whites, the admirable life they lead. Sin is almost unknown to them. "How can we offend God after all He has done for us?" they say.

## CHAPTER XIV

1665 - 1671

## THE INMATES OF THE MONASTERY AGAIN

The residence of the Viceroy during nearly two years in Quebec could not fail to furnish incidents that would be remembered in the cloister. Our old books relate some which seem to merit a place here, were it only to give a picture of life and manners. We must remember that the city itself, on the arrival of these 1200 soldiers, with five hundred workmen, and some two hundred farmers with their families, contained only about seventy dwelling-houses. The principal public monuments to be visited by the strangers, who had come to protect and strengthen the colony, were the cathedral, with the adjoining seminary of Bishop Laval, the college of the Jesuits, the monastery of the Ursulines and the hospital, or Hôtel-Dieu. As to the Château St-Louis, within the Fort, that was the residence of the Viceroy and his household. The Marquis de Tracy, a veteran of seventy years, of lofty stature and military bearing, had come to personate royalty on these distant shores, and royalty of the time of Louis XIV.

Whenever he appeared in public, he was attended by four pages and followed by six footmen. Twenty-four guards preceded, and officers of various grades surrounded him, all apparelled in the bright colors of the military, or in court-dresses. Let us note one occasion which called out, not only the military, but the clergy and all the citizens.

The relics of the holy martyrs, St. Felicitas and St. Flavianus, had been sent to the young Church of Canada by the Holy Father; and the Bishop had ordered a public proces-

sion in their honor. The shrines enclosing the precious relics, placed on stands elegantly decorated with drapery, lights, and flowers, were borne by four venerable priests. A sheltering canopy of scarlet and gold was upheld by the Viceroy, the Governor de Courcelles, the Intendant Talon, and the agent of the West India Company, Barrois. The Bishop in pontifical robes followed, with above forty clergymen in surplice, chasuble and dalmatic. Next came the officers of the Viceroy's household, the citizens according to their rank, the long file of soldiers in full uniform, and finally the mass of the people and the Indians. The procession paused at the church of the Ursulines, which doubtless could not contain all this multitude. The three other churches of the city were stations, and a fifth had been prepared within the Fort.

Another day, the cathedral was consecrated in the midst of a similar concourse, with all the imposing ceremonies of the Roman ritual; this was in July, 1666. In the same month, at the college of the Jesuits, there was an examination; degrees were conferred in philosophy and physics, in presence of the noble personages above mentioned.

But the Marquis de Tracy was not a mere passing visitor at the Ursulines; he was to them a sincere friend and a benefactor. For his powerful protection in a matter that regarded the temporal interests of the community, the Ursulines owe him a lasting debt of gratitude. In debating these questions, and on many other occasions when the pious viceroy called upon the Ursulines, he had an opportunity of appreciating those qualities which gave Mother Mary of the Incarnation such an ascendancy over all who approached her. On her part, she describes the Marquis as not less remarkable for his piety and merit than for his rank. His example, she says, was an inestimable advantage to society,



and his zeal for the welfare of the colony was boundless. His departure she regards as a public loss <sup>1</sup>.

The Ursulines owed to the generosity of the Viceroy the erection of a chapel dedicated to Saint Anne <sup>2</sup> adjoining their church, which cost him above 2,500 livres.

At his request also, their church was blessed by the Bishop with the same magnificence as the cathedral.

Passing now to the interior of the monastery, let us view once more its inmates and examine their labors. Between the years 1667 and 1670, four young ladies had passed from the classes to the novitiate, exchanging their own for a religious name. These were Miss Agnes Duquet, in religion, Sister Agnes of the Nativity, Marie Madeleine Pinguet of the Assumption, Marie Marguerite de Lauzon of St. Charles, and Charlotte Godefroy of the Blessed Sacrament. It appears that the air of Canada and the *régime* of the monastery were specially favorable to longevity in those times. We have here, again, four young novices from the age of fifteen to nineteen, destined like the preceding that we have noticed, to celebrate, some their fiftieth, and some their sixtieth anniversary of profession.

Another novice, admitted to her profession in 1669, was sister LeBer of the Annunciation. Mlle LeBer was born at Pitre, in Normandy. Her two brothers had sought the wilds of Canada, like many others, through motives of piety. Marie,

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1—Mother Mary mentions the Marquis de Tracy in terms that mark both her gratitude and her esteem. "The Marquis de Tracy is returning to France. It is a great loss to the Church and to all the colony which has been saved from destruction by his successful expeditions. For our part we lose the best friend we have had since we are here."

2—The devotion à *la bonne Sainte-Anne*, "Good St. Anne" as our readers well know, is ancient in the country. Their is mention in the *Relations* of marvels wrought at her chapel of the "*Petit Cap*," as early as 1661.

after the death of her parents in France, joined them, fully resolved to consecrate herself to God; but she found means, only at the age of twenty-six, to break the ties that bound her. She might, with some reason, complain of the long delay; but it excites a smile to see that young girl, Miss Pinguet, tired, at fifteen, of "hope deferred," putting on shoes with heels as high as could be worn, that her size may no longer be objected to by the nuns, who seem to think her yet a child. Sister de Lauzon of St. Charles has another way of proving the maturity of her years, preferring the humblest occupations of the monastery, serving the little Indian girls, abasing herself before all, and, far from accepting the services of a lay-sister, as had been stipulated by her parents, she often found means to aid that sister in the manual labor of her office.

While these good sisters were beginning their career an estimable lay-sister was closing hers. It was sister St. Laurent, whose merit is sufficiently made known by some of her last words. "I have thanked God, said she, every day of my life, for having called me to the humble state of a lay-sister in an Ursuline Convent. I would not exchange my veil for the crown of a queen."

The novices above mentioned were confided to Mother Mary of the Incarnation, during the years 1667 and 1669. The community then numbered twenty-two members, and others, earnestly demanded, were expected from France. The labors of the institute, at this period, necessarily increased with the increase of the population in the country <sup>1</sup>.

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1—The *Relations* tell of the increasing prosperity of the colony. The Intendant Talon founded a number of settlements near Quebec. More than 400 soldiers of the Regiment of Carignan were induced to settle in the country. The officers who remained, became Canadian Seigneurs.

We have seen that the limits of the monastery had been extended by the building of a church where the public was admitted, with an interior chapel for the nuns and for their pupils

The state of the seminary for the Indian girls has been noticed in the preceding chapter. As to the French pupils, although our catalogues were destroyed with other useful documents in the second burning of the convent, we may judge of the number of boarders by the statistics of another institution in the City. In 1668, the college of the Jesuits in Quebec was attended by one hundred and twenty students, sixty of them being boarders.<sup>1</sup> That same year Bishop Laval opened the classes of his seminary for boys.

Mother Mary of the Incarnation mentions, in 1668, that the number of pupils is daily increasing, that seven nuns are constantly occupied teaching in the French classes, while for other services there are two lay-sisters. "Some pupils remain six or eight years; others, in the short space of twelve months, must be taught their prayers, reading and writing, arithmetic, the Christian doctrine and morals; in short, all that is most essential in the education of females."

Mother Mary may well add: "A teacher must be unremitting in her efforts to improve every moment, in order to lay a good foundation of instruction!" Even the poorest families sent their daughters two or three months, to be prepared for their first communion. The extern pupils were numerous; but as they came to the convent only for the hours of class, the nuns had not the same opportunity of forming their character as they had with the boarders. Two years later we find another remark that is not less signifi-

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1—Ferland, *Hist. du Canada*.

cant. She says: "The French colony augments notably<sup>1</sup>. The great forests formerly inhabited only by wild beasts begin to be peopled by Christians. Our community is composed of twenty-two nuns; our classes are filled with pupils, French and Indian. We have been obliged to provide other class-rooms, and our venerated Prelate has taken the trouble to write himself to France to procure help for us. He has asked for two nuns and has appointed a Vicar-General, one of his friends, to negotiate the matter." This demand was soon after found too low, and four were finally obtained, as will be noticed later.

Our readers, no doubt, would fain form some acquaintance with those young ladies of the "olden times." Unfortunately we have few notes beyond the brief memoirs of such as became nuns. Some traits of these have already been noticed. We might have added others: for instance, the precocious piety of Geneviève and Anne Bourdon, placed at the Convent at the ages of six and seven; the lovely death of Anne de Lauzon, upon whom the nuns were called to bestow their care from the age of three years. Nothing can be more beautiful than the portrait they have left us of this angelic young creature, called in her sixteenth year to enjoy the company

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1—At the same time she mentions the industrial improvements, introduced by the Intendant, Talon; the tanning of hides, the weaving of cloth made from hemp, flax and wool, the effort he is making to have the women learn to spin, and his offer to provide the materials for teaching the same to the pupils of the convent, both French and Indian.

A glance at the statistics of the country from 1665 to 1671, shows a rapid increase of population in comparison to the preceding years. Before the first mentioned date, there were not 2,500 Europeans in Canada. Two years later the population was 5,870.

The historian Ferland remarks the rapid natural increase of the population in the country. In the course of the year 1671, there were nearly seven hundred children to baptize.

The population of Canada, in 1684, amounted to 17,000.

of the angels in heaven. In consideration of her ardent desire to be admitted to the novitiate, and at her earnest request, she was dressed for her burial as an Ursuline, and laid beside the three whose graves were beneath the chapel.

Another young lady for whom a brief memoir has been traced in our old books for a similar reason, is Miss Marie des Moulins of Three Rivers. Confided to the nuns at the age of four, she grew up pious, amiable and intelligent, and seemed destined to complete the happiness of her excellent parents in the family circle; but God had not so ordained. At the age of fourteen, she, like her companion, Miss de Lauzon, saw death approaching, and bade him welcome. To the privilege of being waited upon by the nuns in their infirmary, she begged them to add that of being buried in the religious dress. Miss des Moulins also, reposes in the cemetery with the Ursulines deceased.

Other pupils of Mother Mary's time consecrated their lives to the service of God in the Hôtel-Dieu of Quebec; for instance, the two Misses Bourdon, Misses Marie Marguerite and Marie Madeleine Gloria: others in the Hôtel-Dieu at Montreal, as Miss LeDuc, who had greatly edified her classmates (1669) at the Ursulines, before returning to edify her native place by embracing the laborious life of a hospital nun. Miss Marie Racine had preceded Miss LeDuc in the religious state. Miss Marie Morin, the first Canadian novice received at the Hôtel-Dieu of Montreal, had also been a model of piety and amiable deportment while at the Ursulines, desiring above all things to be a martyr of the Faith. Before attaining her fourteenth year, she had essayed the state of life in which she persevered to the age of eighty-two. She left her community a lasting memorial of her piety and her talents, by writing their annals, a work in which she was engaged till the age of seventy-five.

Let us mention also the Misses Moyer, one of whom, after being a captive of the Iroquois, married Major Lambert Closse, the hero of Montreal. Her sister became the wife of Captain du Gué of the regiment of Carignan. Miss du Clos, daughter of the intrepid Madame du Clos<sup>1</sup>, whose name is another celebrity of Montreal, was accompanied to the Ursulines by two of her friends, Miss Saily and Miss LeDuc<sup>2</sup>.

Brief as these notes are, they give us an insight into the sealed book of the past, and enable us to form some estimate of the institute as it was two hundred and fifty years ago.

As to the qualifications of the teachers of those days, we know that our beloved Mother Mary of the Incarnation was ready to impart to the other Sisters all that could be communicated. Even in the last months of her life she had a class of young nuns around her, learning the Indian languages. She wrote in French several valuable treatises for the use of the institute, besides a sacred history in Algonquin, a dictionary and a catechism in Iroquois, a dictionary in Algonquin, a catechism in Huron, another catechism and a prayer-book in Algonquin. She excelled in all kinds of needle-work and embroidery, as well as in painting and gilding. While she sanctified these talents by working for the altar, and contributing to the decoration of chapels and churches all over the country, her young Sisters, as well as the pupils, loved to

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1—For many other names of the olden times, the "Heroic Age of Canada" as they have been called,—see *Histoire des Ursulines*, Tome Ier.

2—Several Officers of the famed Regiment of Carignan-Salières married in the country, and found "*excellent matches*" in the pupils of the Ursulines. For instance, M. de Sorel married Catherine LeGardeur de Repentigny, of Quebec (1668); M. Berthier, Marie LeGardeur (1672); M. Chambly, Louise de Launay; M. Verchères, Marie Perrot (1669); M. Gauthier de Varennes, Marie Boucher, etc., etc.

take lessons of the amiable Mother, and were happy to aid her in her toils. Even in sculpture and architecture, this indefatigable Mother was skilful. It was she who directed the workmen, employed in decorating the interior of the church with architectural ornaments, guiding them for the proportions of the columns, capitals and entablature, as well as in the minute details of the art.

We have mentioned that other nuns from France had been invited to join the little community.

News reached the monastery on the 15th September that a vessel detained at the *Ile aux Coudres*, by contrary winds, had Ursulines on board—Ursulines from France! Several of the nuns knew what it was to be rocked for three months in one of those wooden prisons, called a merchant-ship—not to speak of the fare and the accommodations in those days.

As the wind continued contrary, they would, at least, send them refreshments; perhaps a smaller vessel would find its way against the wind. A little sloop was accordingly sent, with a cordial invitation to accept the protection of the good Jesuit Brother Juchereau, the pilot of the bark, and M. de Dombourg<sup>1</sup> who had generously placed himself at the head of the expedition. Sailors were hired to man the vessel and the convent-steward added to the equipment. They were strong and resolute, "*gens de cœur*," but all their efforts to make a prompt voyage only enabled them to reach Quebec on the 19th. We need not ask if the time seemed long. It gave the voyagers time to remark the beauty of the environs, already beginning to put on the gay colors of an autumnal landscape; the lovely islands among which they were

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1.—This M. de Dombourg was son of M. Bourdon, and brother of Mothers St. Joseph and St. Agnes.

detained, *Ile-aux-Coudres*, *Ile-aux-Oies*, inhabited even then ; the fertile Island of Orleans with its pleasant farm-houses. All along the shores of the St. Lawrence they had seen villages and hamlets, where thirty years before dark forests frowned.

Let us meet now upon the wharf, where thirty-two years before our first Ursulines landed, that missionary band, so long and anxiously expected. Of these four French ladies, wearing the black robe of the Ursuline, two are from the monastery of Bourges : Mother Marie Drouet of Jesus, nineteen years professed, and Marie Gibault du Breuil of St. Joseph, four years professed. Two others are from the " great Convent " of Paris ; it is Mother Marie Le Maire of the Angels, once a rich Parisian lady, accompanied by a lay-sister, Mary Dieu of the Resurrection.

Great was the joy of the cloistered family on receiving this desired accession to their number, not mere young girls, to be formed to the religious life, but persons of mature years trained in fervent communities, and ready now for any labor. Such were the persons demanded by Bishop Laval, by Mother Mary of the Incarnation and Mother St. Athanasius. The last-named, about fifty years old, was still hale and vigorous ; her elder was past " three score and ten." The other two, Mothers St. Croix and St. Clare, who in the offices of Assistant and Zelatrix, had aided in the government of the house for the last thirty years, were not younger.

Without anticipating upon the future career of usefulness of these three Mothers, we shall merely say that all passed long years in the office of Superior, and not only contributed to the prosperity of the monastery they had come to aid, but founded and governed in turn that of Three Rivers.

Our missionaries, while we have been discussing their merits, have been introduced to their new Sisters. We shall not



attempt to describe the scene. The two Parisians find one from their own monastery, Mother St. Athanasius, at the head of the community, in place of the recent Superior, Mother Mary of the Incarnation, who has now charge of the novitiate. The other members are all known to our readers, or soon will be <sup>1</sup>. The pupils, as is usual on such occasions, took an active part in the welcoming.

A few days later they comply with a general custom, a sort of by-law for the two communities on similar occasions, and visit the good hospital-nuns of the Hôtel-Dieu. They do not find a numerous, but a fervent, happy community, continuing the labors and emulating the bright examples of their foundresses.

Our voyagers had also to acquit themselves of a pious vow. This took them, still accompanied by the amiable Madame de la Peltrie, to the statue of the Blessed Virgin, honored in the chapel of Notre Dame de Foye. They would not, of course, fail to visit that much-talked-of Huron village, where Father Chaumonot attends with assiduous care his beloved exiles <sup>2</sup>, now reduced to 150 souls. The aged village-chief, past his eightieth year, was there, ready to harangue the "holy virgins" in his most picturesque style, and all these good Christians invoked upon them a thousand blessings.

Had our voyagers postponed this visit a few weeks, they might have witnessed an edifying spectacle.

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1—See list at the end of the present Chapter.

2—After the Hurons were attacked on the Isle of Orleans by the Mohawks, in 1656, a part of them voluntarily emigrated to the country of their enemy, and became incorporated with them: such was the custom of these nations. The remainder were transferred to Quebec, and lodged in a fort (on the edge of Mountain Hill) built for them till peace was restored in 1666; then they removed about five miles from the city, and founded the mission of Notre Dame de Foye. Some twenty-five years later they removed to Lorette, nine miles north of Quebec.

At the commencement of Advent, Mother Mary of the Incarnation sent the worthy chief a wax figure of the Infant Jesus. These simple-hearted people received it as a present from heaven. Each poor cabin became, in turn, a chapel, while from week to week their devotions were prolonged and their acts of virtue, till the Feast of the Purification closed the Christmas-tide.

In the hamlet of Sillery, our travellers heard the good Algonquins and Montagnais in their devout chapel, entone, as they had done thirty-two years before, sweet hymns that moved strangely the hearts of these French ladies. Yet what ravages sickness<sup>1</sup> has made in this once flourishing mission! The poor Indians are but a handful, compared to former times, when Madame de la Peltrie had seen happy groups of romping children follow her, their *Ningay*, more fondly than their own mothers. But the kind-hearted, generous lady, who had done much for Sillery, visits to-day her poor Indians, her dear former seminarists, for the last time. Did her good angel whisper to her that she would return no more? Or did the good squaws, with tearful eyes, follow wistfully the receding figure of their pious benefactress as she disappeared for the last time from their hamlet?

But let us not delay our narrative. Madame de la Peltrie conducts the good nuns back to the Convent: they have come to labor and we shall find them engaged, at once, in teaching the French classes, while they take lessons from

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1—The Algonquins and Montagnais of Sillery had nearly all been carried off by the small pox. *Rel.* 1670.

From this period Sillery became an Abenaki mission, until a new site was found for them in 1683, at the falls of the Chaudière, south of Quebec.

Mother Mary of the Incarnation in the Indian languages.  
The following list will show us their companions:

A LIST OF THE CHOIR-NUNS, IN 1671

(*Professed in France.*)

	Arrival.
Mother Marie Guyart of the Incarnation.....	1639
" Cécile Richer of Ste. Croix.....	1639
" Anne Le Bugle of St. Clare.....	1640
" Marguerite de Flecelles of St. Athanasius.....	1640
" Anne Le Boue of Our Lady.....	1644
" Marie de Villiers of St. Andrew.....	1657
" Marie du Breuil of St. Joseph.....	1671
" Marie Drouet of Jesus.....	1671
" Marie Le Maire of the Angels.....	1671

(*Professed in the Monastery of Quebec.*)

	Profession.
Mother Charlotte Barré of St. Ignatius.....	1648
" Philippe Gertrude de Boulogne of St. Dominic.....	1650
" Marie Geneviève Bourdon of St. Joseph.....	1654
" Anne Bourdon of St. Agnes.....	1660
" Marie Boutet of St. Augustin.....	1661
" Louise Godefroy of St. John the Evangelist.....	1668
" Marie Angélique Poisson of St. Francis Xavier.....	1668
" Agnès Duquet of the Nativity.....	1669
" Marie Madeleine Pinguet of the Assumption.....	1669
" Charlotte Godefroy of the Blessed Sacrament.....	1669
" Marie Le Ber of the Annunciation.....	1670
" Marie Madeleine de Lauzon of St. Charles.....	1672

(*Lay-Sisters.*)

Sister Catherine Lezeau of St. Ursula.....	1648
" Frances Ouën of St. Magdalen.....	1655
" Antoinette Makinon of St. Martha.....	1659
" Marie Dodier of the Passion.....	1660
" Marie Dieu of the Resurrection (from Paris).....	1671

## CHAPTER XV

1671 - 1672

## THE CLOSE OF WELL-SPENT YEARS

The rejoicings with which the nuns newly arrived from France had been received, had hardly subsided into the calm of daily life, when a cloud arose to overshadow the Monastery with sorrow. The favors solicited had been granted: Heaven now demanded a sacrifice, as unlooked-for as it was severe. The good foundress who had lived with her beloved Ursulines, sharing their poverty and their labors, practising the sweet virtues of humility, gentleness and mortification, which endeared her to them far more than her generous donations in their favor, was about to disappear from their midst.

It was early in November, when Madame de la Peltrie was struck with her last illness. Seven days seemed a short space for the nuns to prepare to lose her, but to the pious lady herself, the summons of death brought no terror. She had no sooner been warned that her malady, a violent attack of pleurisy, endangered her life, than she occupied herself in settling her temporal affairs, and signing her will, the royal Intendant, Talon, with the necessary witnesses, being present. She took her leave of the Intendant, expressing her thanks for his visit with as much ease and presence of mind, as if the occasion had been an ordinary occurrence.

The last Sacraments, administered by the Vicar General M. de Bernières, were to her a source of abundant strength and consolation. Seeing the nuns in sorrow, surrounding her with affectionate solicitude, and seeking by a thousand delicate attentions to procure her some alleviation in her sufferings, she was visibly affected, and declared, as Mother St.

Joseph had on her death bed, that God had given her the promised hundred-fold in this life for all she had abandoned for His love.

As life ebbed slowly away the hours seemed long to her; so ardent were her desires to be forever united to her God, and often she repeated the words of the Psalmist: "*Laetatus sum in his quæ dicta sunt mihi, in domum Domini ibimus* :—I rejoice in the words that have been said unto me, that I shall go into the House of the Lord."

These words were accomplished in her on the evening of the 19th November, 1671, leaving her spiritual daughters saddened by her loss, yet consoled by a close of life so tranquil, so full of the sweet hope of eternal blessedness.

Madame de la Peltrie was sixty-eight years of age; but the natural vivacity of her character, and the healthful influence of such occupations as hers had been—exercises of piety and good works—are a great preservative against the ravages of time. No one had ever thought she was growing old. Her unobtrusive virtues had been an unfailing source of edification to the good nuns and to all who knew her; while to the poor and to the missions, she had been a constant and generous benefactress.

Her funeral obsequies were attended by the Governor and his suite, with the most distinguished persons of the city, as well as of the neighborhood. Her loss was universally deplored; nor were the poor Indians the last in their demonstrations of sorrow.

Our Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation had assisted her companion at the hour of her departure from this world. She seemed to have outlived her only to console her Sisters, and to animate them by her own example of perfect resignation to the will of Heaven. Alas! another and a greater sacrifice would soon be demanded of them.

Early in January a serious malady threatened the precious life of that beloved Mother for whom each of the nuns would have gladly given her own.

Overwhelmed with grief, they besought Heaven to spare them the dreaded sacrifice, and the venerable patient, unable to refuse them this consolation, joined in their petitions so far as to say: "My God, if I may yet be of service to this little community, I do not refuse the labor nor the fatigue: Thy will be done."—"No, my good Mother, that is not enough, urged the kind Father Lalemant, you must join our petitions and ask to recover." Ever obedient, she fulfilled the injunction. Thus was obtained a few weeks' respite; but it was only a delay. The bilious affection from which she had suffered severely for eight years past, with a few intervals of comparative health, had impaired her naturally strong constitution, and the hour was at hand when it must fail altogether.

During Holy Week, in the month of April, the Venerable Mother was obliged once more to suffer herself to be conducted to the infirmary. Her sufferings, which were intense, only served to unite her soul more closely to God.—"*Christo confixa sum cruci.*" I am crucified with Jesus on the Cross."—These words were not a complaint, but the expression of the joy of her heart. On the 29th of April, she received the Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction, entering from that moment into so intimate a communication with God that she seemed no longer of earth. While her dear Sisters, overcome with tender sorrow, surrounded the dying saint, her tranquil aspect inspired them with higher thoughts; that sick-room seemed the porch of heaven. Visitors who were allowed to behold a spectacle so impressive, spoke low, and stayed the "farewell," they had intended to pronounce.

Mother St. Athanasius, whose grief, intensified by that of each of her Sisters, rendered her the more thoughtful of all who, with her, would soon mourn their dearest friend, reminded her of her son, and asked a message for him. Mother Mary of the Incarnation, recalled a moment to earth by maternal love, answered with emotion : " Tell him that I bear him away with me in my heart. In heaven I will ask for his perfect sanctification."

Already, several times, the boarders, French and Indian, had knelt around to receive her blessing. On the morning of the day of her death, having asked to see once more her dear seminarists, she spoke to them admirably in their own language, on the beauty of the Christian doctrine and the happiness of serving God, and gave them, with effusion, her last blessing.

From noon to six o'clock in the evening, she remained absorbed in God, speechless, yet conscious, awaiting in peace the moment of her departure. The nuns, kneeling beside their dying Mother and friend, felt the tranquilizing influence of those marks of predestination which transformed the chamber of death, to a sanctuary.

The 30th of April was drawing to a close. The Venerable Mother will soon hear the welcome summons : " Come, faithful soul ! enter into the joy of the Lord," She opened her dying eyes upon her beloved Sisters with a look full of love, as if to bless them and say " adieu." One feeble sigh was heard. Life was over. The spirit, disenthralled, had sped on wings of love to the bosom of its God.

That moment, so overwhelming to surviving friends, when suspense has yielded to certainty, when the last sigh has dispelled the secret hope that life would yet be prolonged, was not followed by an outburst of grief and lamentation. A ray of immortality seemed to illumine the features of the

departed, and heavenly consolations filled the hearts of those who wept an irreparable loss.

The Venerable Mother had expired at the age of seventy-two years <sup>1</sup>, thirty-three of which had been spent in Canada. The intelligence of her decease was received in the city and throughout the colony, with sentiments that corresponded to the universal esteem in which she was held, and the gratitude which almost every family owed her.

On the day of her burial, that veteran of the sanctuary, Father Lalemant, now seventy-nine years of age, pronounced the panegyric of the deceased, applying to her the attributes of the "valiant woman," as depicted in Scripture. The church was thronged with a dense concourse. In the midst of the mourners, as the whole audience might be called, were the Governor de Courcelles and the Royal Intendant. It was at their request that the coffin was not lowered into the grave before an artist had been employed to transfer to canvas, if possible, some trace of that celestial beauty which struck the beholders with veneration.

Our readers will not expect to find here a biographical notice of Venerable Mother Marie de l'Incarnation. The bare enumeration of her remarkable qualities, the heroic virtues, the marvels of grace that constituted her interior life, and which have made her, according to Bossuet, the "Teresa of the New World," would require many pages.

It suffices to have read even the briefest sketch of her life to remark her wonderful and versatile talents, the thoroughness of her character, her unerring and enlightened judgment; the extraordinary powers of her well-balanced mind. At the same time one is struck with her spirit of self-sacrifice, her utter reliance upon Providence, which was only equalled by

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1—She was born Oct. 28th, 1599.



her vast charity, and her insatiable zeal for the salvation of souls. The wonderful extension of the Faith during the last years of her life, consoled her in proportion to the interior martyrdom she had suffered, while she saw the efforts of the missionaries baffled, and the salvation of the poor pagans retarded. Christianity was now triumphant throughout the land; and, if she, in her humility, considered herself and her community as a mere "grain of sand" in the foundation of the Church of Canada, the object of her solicitude, and of her burning zeal, by others her labors and her success were appreciated differently.

The illustrious Bishop Laval has written her eulogium, from which we select one passage. "Mother Mary of the Incarnation, having been chosen by God to establish the Order of St. Ursula in Canada, was endowed with the plenitude of the spirit of that holy Institute. She was a perfect Superior, an excellent mistress of novices, and was well qualified for all the offices in a religious community. Her life, which interiorly was all divine, was so well regulated outwardly that she was a living rule for her Sisters. Her zeal for the salvation of souls, and especially for that of the poor Indians, was so ardent, that she seemed to embrace them all within her heart. We do not doubt that to her prayers are due, in a great measure, the blessings which the Church of Canada now enjoys."

Charlevoix, who wrote her life about fifty years after her decease, says, that "history presents us few women to be compared to her." Of her writings he declares: "They prove her to have been one of the most intelligent women of that century. Every thing is solid in her writings. The thoughts are just, her assertions never hazarded; her manner is original, and her style is marked by that noble simplicity which few writers attain."

We cannot take our leave of the subject without allowing our readers to hear how the decease of Mother Mary of the Incarnation and of Madame de la Peltrie, was announced in the Relation of 1672. The writer, Father LeMercier, opens a biographical notice of thirty columns in the following terms :

" The death of those two illustrious persons is a public affliction. They were venerated for their virtue and holiness ; but they were especially cherished and esteemed for having founded an institution for the instruction of female youth, both French and Indian, thereby contributing greatly to the solid establishment and progress of the colony of New France. These two holy souls burned with the same zeal, and had no other object in view but to live and die in the love of God, and, at the peril of their lives, to cause Him to be known and loved by the people of this New World <sup>1</sup>."

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## CHAPTER XVI

1675 - 1682

### IN AFTER YEARS

The Venerable Mother, whose labors had extended over the thirty-three first years of the Ursuline Monastery, had disappeared from the midst of her beloved family, and her

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1—Two years previous, the same Father had written : " It is an inestimable happiness for Canada to have possessed, since thirty years, the religious houses of the Ursulines and the Hospital-nuns. These two institutions were necessary here, and the nuns have acquitted themselves with honor and with merit of all that God or man could demand of them, in the discharge of the duties of their respective callings."

death had left a void that could not be filled. But the beneficent influence of her admirable life remained. Her dying blessing, with the rich inheritance of her zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, rested there, and her spirit still dwelt with those whom Providence had assembled to continue the work she had commenced.

Who were those favored souls, chosen to perpetuate the spirit and the labors of the Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation? What are the vicissitudes which the Monastery was destined to witness in subsequent years? To answer these questions, we shall again open, in favor of our readers, that old record of by-gone days, the monastic annals.

There we find recounted the triumphs of divine grace in the call to a religious life, and in the faithful correspondence of the soul to its sublime vocation. There are detailed the simple, yet heartfelt joys of the cloister, with its toils, its providential trials and occasional sufferings, its pious enterprises, and other incidents that vary the even flow of the stream of time within the protecting walls of the monastery. There we may perceive, at all times, a deep under-current of peace, the sure indication of detachment from earth, and of hopes fixed on things above.

Revisiting the monastery three years after the death of the Venerable Mother, 1675, we learn that the aged Jesuit who assisted her in her last moments, Father Jerome Lalemant, only survived her a few months, and he has been succeeded in the double office of chaplain and director by another member of the Society of Jesus, Father Beschefer. Consulting next the statistics of the monastery, we find that twenty-five professed nuns compose the cloistered family, the Superior being still Mother de Flecelles of St. Athanasius. Two new members have just entered: Miss de Lauson, daughter of the Seneschal de Lauson, and grand-

daughter of the former governor of New France of that name. The other young maiden, from the *Côte de Beaupré*, is Miss Marie Madeleine Gravel, who in the humble condition of lay-sister, rendered great services to her community during forty-eight years, and died in the fervor of her first consecration to God. Up to this date (1675) only four deaths had occurred in the monastery since 1639, a period of thirty-six years.

Passing over two winters more, we reach a hallowed anniversary, the 30th April. It is the fifth recurrence of the day, since a death, "precious in the sight of the Lord," has rendered it memorable, and far from being invested with gloom, there is a joyous ceremony prepared for the occasion. A young maiden is about to enroll herself under the banner of St. Ursula, exchanging all the pleasures and advantages which the world could offer her, for the title of spouse of Christ. She will receive, moreover, a name that is also an inheritance, and Miss Marie Catherine Pinguet will henceforth be known as Sister Mary Catherine of the Incarnation.

Two other young ladies are clothed with the dark robe and white veil of an Ursuline novice before the close of the year. The names which they will bear in the community, the one fifty-five and the other seventy years, are Mother Marie-Madeleine Amiot of the Conception, and Mother Marie-Anne Anceau of St. Teresa. We shall have occasion to mention, elsewhere, these three worthy Mothers, all of whom will be found among the Superiors of the monastery. In the department of the institute, we find the usual joyous groups of young French girls, pursuing the pleasant paths of science, proportioned to the times, to their years and condition. There was also a sufficient number of little Indian girls to form a class, and these were not cared for with less tenderness than those, nor with less fruit for their souls.

It was the time when the diplomatic governor, Count de Frontenac, seeking to strengthen the influence of the French over the restless Iroquois, had conceived the plan of adopting the daughters of their chiefs, after their own fashion, and placing them in the convent to be instructed. Each time he made the journey to and from Cataraqui (Kingston), some of these little dark-eyed girls of the forest were sure to be in his company. The missionaries also among the Algonquins, the Abenakis, and the Hurons at Lorette, would send the most intelligent of their young female neophytes, knowing the immense benefit it was for the whole tribe, to have among them one of these pious *seminarists*, so well instructed in her religion.

Fragments of old lists that have escaped destruction, are yet inscribed with the names of some of this little class of forest-girls of 1682-83. Thus: "On the 15th of July, 1682, Marie Durand, left the seminary (the Indian class is always thus designated by our Mothers) after having been provided with board and clothing during the year.

"Little Barbe, of the Mohawk tribe, who had been in the seminary six years, has returned to her parents at Old Lorette."

Other names, at the same date, are: "Théodosie, Denise, Geneviève, Charlotte, Anne-Thérèse, Agnes Weskwes (Abenakis)." Evidently, the children of the forest are no longer numerous at the convent as they were in the earlier times.

Let us make a longer pause at 1682. It is the first of June, and we find the community disposed to elect a Superior, their House of Assembly on these occasions being no other than the chapel where they have first consecrated their lives to the service of God; their preparatory consultation, a three days' exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, special

prayers, and finally the Holy Sacrifice of the mass and communion.

Our readers have seen the much esteemed Mother St. Athanasius, and Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation, during thirty-six years, called alternately to the rank of Superior by the united voice of their Sisters. Each had held as from the hand of God, that office of trust and responsibility, which gives its possessor only a larger share of labor and solicitude for the common weal; while the title "Mother," or more sweetly "Our Mother," reminds her, at each moment, of the spirit in which she is to wield the sceptre of authority. Neither had ever forgotten the words of St. Augustine, admonishing the Superior to remember, that "if she precedes her Sisters in honor before the world, yet before God she is bound to place herself humbly at their feet, rendering herself of good example to all, and esteeming herself happy, not in the right she has to command, but in the facility her position affords her to serve and succor her Sisters in a spirit of charity."

The code of legislation adopted by the order of St. Ursula provides further for the welfare of all its members, by limiting the offices that entail the greatest amount of fatigue and responsibility to a term of three years, subject to be prolonged by a re-election to six years, and not more, without an interval of repose. Nor is the direction of the little commonwealth left to the simple will of the Superior, however excellent may be her qualifications. She has her "Constitutions," to which she must conform in the acts of her government; she has also her coadjutors, who share, in the various departments of the monastery, the burden of authority; this is the "Privy Council," while the "Legislature" comprises the whole community of choir-sisters, after a certain number of years of profession.

But while we have discussed the form of government, our nuns have had other preoccupations. They have discovered that Mother St. Athanasius, obeying the impulse of her great humility, has provided herself with the right to decline the rank to which they were so desirous to raise her for the seventh time. The permission has been given, and the Bishop refuses to retract it. Grieved, but submissive to the decision of their ecclesiastical Superior, they proceed to their election. Another of the French nuns who had joined the Ursulines of Quebec, in 1671, Mother Marie Drouet of Jesus is called to succeed Mother Gibault du Breuil of St. Joseph, who had governed the monastery for the last six years. These two, with Mother Le Maire of the Angels, will guide the bark of St. Ursula till the close of the century, in the same spirit as their predecessors, a spirit of meekness and charity.

Thus, during sixty years and more, the community of Quebec had the advantage of being governed by Superiors, who had imbibed the true principles of religious observance in the well organized and fervent convents of the Order in France. These had been founded at the beginning of the 17th century, by the daughters of St. Angela, under circumstances most favorable to the true spirit of her institute. The two Congregations of Paris and Bordeaux gave rise, directly or indirectly, before the close of the century, to about two hundred monasteries: both had contributed to found the Ursulines of Quebec, the first of the Order in the New World.

Eventually, five nuns of the Congregation of Tours (or Bordeaux) and seven of Paris, including two lay-sisters, gave their services to the foundation of this monastery. Six were yet living at the date with which this chapter closes: their names will appear more than once in the following pages.

## CHAPTER XVII

1686

## A MEMORABLE DATE

The dimensions of the monastery as rebuilt by Mother Mary of the Incarnation, with its adjoining church and choir, had sufficed for some thirty years; but the number of pupils augmenting with the population of the country, it was resolved, in the spring of 1686, to build a separate department for the nuns, in order to appropriate the greater part of the main building to the use of the boarders.

Accordingly, on the 22nd of June, the ceremony of laying the corner-stone took place in this wise. "At one o'clock in the afternoon, the community being assembled around the foundations with the pupils, all knelt to sing an anthem in honor of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Then a little Indian girl, named Marie-Rose, dressed in white and representing the Infant Jesus, laid the first stone, upon which had been placed a medal of the Holy Family, as a perpetual memorial that this building was in honor of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and under their powerful protection."

Little Marie-Rose reminds us of another Indian girl for whom another ceremony took place that same year. Let us see what religion could do for a child of the forest. It is a brief and simple tale, and soon there will be no more to tell, for the seminarians are fast disappearing, with their people, once possessors of the country we inhabit.

Little Agnes Weskwas belonged to the tribe of the Abenakis, and to the mission of Bécancour, (opposite Three Rivers). The good missionary, Father Bigot, S. J., had first sent the little girl to the convent, to be instructed for her first



communion, at the age of ten or eleven. Agnes was gentle and attentive to the lessons of her devoted teachers. That great action which influences the whole life of a Christian, made a strong impression upon her, and when she returned to her parents, it was to edify them by her piety, and to impart to others the holy teachings she had received.

But the forest had lost its charms for her. The rude games of her young companions could no longer amuse her, as they moved in cadence to their own wild melodies. The fur robe, adorned with embroidery, the moccasins, bright with beads, with which the tender mother sought to win her little daughter, were of no avail to make her forget the convent. She was often seen in the direction of the cabin which served as a chapel. She went there to pray, hoping also to meet the good missionary, who surely would take her back, some day, to "the House of Jesus" and to the dear Mothers who had taught her to love and obey the Great Spirit. Her importunities were at length successful: an Indian mother cannot refuse the request of her child, and doubtless the Black-Robe secretly rejoiced to find one Genevieve among his flock.

In the early spring of 1686, the little forest-maiden was again admitted within the cloister; again she knelt in the quiet chapel where she had first received the Bread of Life. Did she, as she approached the holy altar on the feast of the Annunciation, confide some important secret to her heavenly Mother? Did she petition never more to leave her convent-home?

It may have been so; for a few days later, the wild flower drooped, as if it felt the rays of the hottest sun. A mortal sickness had seized the gentle child; and truly it was an edifying spectacle for the nuns to witness with what patience, grateful for their least attentions, murmuring words of

prayer, she could suffer. Soon, the danger becoming apparent, the last rites of the Church brought strength for the supreme moment, and the little Indian girl, on the 5th of April, breathed forth in peace her pure young soul into the hands of Him who gave it.

A canoe from the Indian settlement of Becancour was already on its way to Quebec; for a messenger had been sent to warn the parents that their Agnes was dangerously ill. When they reached the convent, it was not to meet their beloved child; her pallid bier strewed with flowers, awaited them in the church. Around it knelt many of her companions, watching the dead and praying for the repose of her soul. This peaceful and touching sight, joined to the recital of her happy end, which the nuns, with consoling words, gave the afflicted parents, moderated their grief.

On the following day, the service was sung with solemnity in the convent church, so different from the chapel of the mission. The voices of the nuns and the pupils mingled in the burial strains, full of anticipation of the joys of Paradise, and the procession went forth. It was composed of the clergy from the parish-church, a goodly number of citizens, as well as all the Indians in, or around Quebec, and closed with that virginal bier, borne by the young students of the college. Four of the seminarists, in white dresses and flowing veils, upheld the corners of the muslin pall, while the other little Indian girls, attired in a similar manner, formed another group, preceding the mourners. When the parents and friends of the youthful Agnes witnessed such honors rendered to the mortal remains of one of their nation, it no doubt tended much to console them, as well as to give them a high idea of that Faith which knows no distinction of race, but embraces all the children of God in one sentiment of charity.

For our part, assisting in spirit at this touching ceremony, we have involuntarily brought to mind the image of Madame de la Peltrie, and all her love for the poor children of the forest, for whose salvation she would have willingly given her life. And it has seemed to us fitting that the last Requiem Mass, sung in that church which the pious lady had raised, and where she now reposed, should be for the soul of an Indian maid.

The catastrophe which we have announced as A MEMORABLE DATE was not foreshadowed by any sign of approaching disaster.

The summer season quickly passed, and October came. That month brings one of those days which, in a community, resembles a family-gathering: it is the feast of St. Ursula, patroness of the Order. On such occasions, the divine Office is chanted with the rites of first-class. High Mass is celebrated with solemnity; the whole church is brilliantly adorned, and the altar glows with lights and flowers. The consecrated virgins, who follow the banner of the far-famed princess of Albion, are filled with rejoicing, as they contemplate that heavenly kingdom, where they too hope one day to follow the Lamb, and sing that canticle, unknown to all the other inhabitants of the celestial Jerusalem.

But thoughts far different from these are suggested by the date of the vigil of that festival, in 1686. It was a Sunday, and as such, the day formed a part of the approaching solemnity, doubling its splendor and its privileges.

Let us, for a moment, picture the aspect of the monastery on that memorable 20th October. It was not then, the *Old Monastery*, but young and fresh, peacefully sheltering its happy inmates. The previous week, in that early autumn, had realized the warmth and loveliness of the Indian summer.

Not a tree in that wide-stretching landscape, had yet lost the wealth of its many-colored and bright-tinted foliage. Embosomed in the original forest, the monastery stood like a country-residence; the sombre hues of its grey stone walls, contrasting agreeably with the bright green of the still verdant lawn in front, and the rich hues of its surroundings. To the left, the pretty church with its heavenward-pointing spire, gave a finish to the picture, while to the right, the rising walls of the new building announced the enterprise and growing prosperity of the establishment.

Within the choir, was assembled, on this early Sunday morning, the entire population of the monastery. The nuns were there, kneeling in their stalls, while young girls, from the age of six to sixteen, and swarthy faces that denote the forest-children of Canada, filled the lower extremity of the chapel. Beyond the grating, not a few pious worshippers offered their prayers in that quiet church, rich in gilding and tasteful architecture, where the spirit of Madame de la Peltrie and the Venerable Marie de l'Incarnation seemed still to dwell. Mass was nearly over. The nuns, in their long mantles, had lowered their veils over their faces as they retired from the Holy Table; it was that blissful moment, the "thanksgiving" after Communion, when each in peace and trust is wont to renew that total sacrifice of herself, implied in her sacred vows.

Suddenly, a confused sound of human voices and the clangor of the parlor-bell, rung as by an impatient hand, startled the peaceful congregation. Mother Superior quits her place to answer the unwonted summons, the import of which, in one moment, was but too evident. Her rapid footsteps bear her quickly through the smoke that already filled the passages, to the extremity of the main building, where a fire had been

lit in the huge kitchen-chimney of those olden times.—O terror ! the whole apartment was wrapped in flames !

Promptly closing the door through which the smoke was densely pouring, she hurries back to the chapel, and in a voice of distress, cries out : “ All is lost ! The whole house is in flames. Get to a place of safety as quickly as possible.”

That sad voice was all that broke the silence of the sacred fane. The order was obeyed with one impulse. The pupils, followed by the nuns, issued from the nearest door into the court-yard, while the smoke and the seething flames, bursting from doors and windows, left no doubt as to the urgency of this precipitate flight. The citizens who had given the first alarm were soon joined, with shouts and lamentations, by all the population of the city. But, with the fire, a strong wind from the north had arisen, and the dry pine floors and partitions bore swiftly forward the destroying element through the entire length of the main-building towards the chapel and church. Seeing the certain ruin that threatened the whole establishment, all efforts were now directed toward saving, at least, the vestments, the sacred relics, and the altar-furniture. These were in part secured, with the business papers of the community. And yet, at what risks ! The heroic lay-sister who was transporting the rich reliquaries, remained, after every one else had fled from the danger, till, on a sudden she perceived that the flames had left her no other egress but through the attic over the church. She speeds her way, laden with her precious burden, and is saved from her perilous situation by being helped down through the windows in the roof ! <sup>1</sup>

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1.—This brave Sister, whose name was Marie Montmesnil de Ste. Cécile, was a native of Normandy. She lived fifty-four years after the narrow escape of perishing by fire, related above : she was aged 81, at her decease, in 1740.

It was enough that no life was lost, although every thing else perished. All the movables, including the annals of the convent, valuable books, objects of piety or of usefulness that were almost sacred from having belonged to the Venerable Mother or her companions; all the stores and provisions, the furniture of the school-rooms, beds and clothing, were destroyed, as at the first burning of the convent, in the space of a few hours. The new building, consisting yet of unfinished walls, underwent the fate of the rest, though with less damage. The out-houses were included in the destruction, with the exception of two small buildings, the bake-house and wash-house; even these had to be unroofed, in order to be preserved. One small building, at the distance of some sixty yards, stood entire; it was the house of refuge, left by Madame de la Peltrie, which, thirty-six years before, had sheltered the community in similar circumstances.

But who can well imagine the scene, when the flames having obtained complete mastery, drove all the spectators to a distance, and revelled there with all the fury of short-lived triumph. The roof of the main building, with its cross-surmounted cupola, had sunk, while the tossing flames rose higher and brighter; but it was on the church that all eyes were riveted. Its wide arched windows glowed with the furnace-heat within, when suddenly the spire was enveloped as with a fiery shroud. Another torrent ran from point to point along the pine beams of the groaning roof, till the whole gave way at the same moment with a tremendous crash, and there remained one glowing heap of ruins, where an hour before had knelt devout worshippers in peaceful adoration!

Among the spectators of this fearful scene, we find three aged nuns who, at the dead of a winter's night, thirty-six

years before, had witnessed the destruction of the first convent, raised on that same spot. Mother St. Athanasius, now seventy-three years of age, Mother Ste. Croix, almost four-score, and Mother St. Ignatius, nearly seventy, knew by sad experience what it was to be driven from their convent-home by fire.

And how dear those halls, those cells, that choir, the class-rooms, the very floors where the Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation had trod, must have been to all these her beloved Sisters, most of whom had lived there many years under her maternal care ! It was like so many relics doomed to destruction. But grace was not less powerful on this occasion than on the former. They " who forsake parents, or brothers and sisters, houses or lands," to follow their Lord, are careful not to suffer their hearts to be captivated by any thing earthly. So, when the flames had made a holocaust of the fruit of thirty years' economy, there was neither lamentation nor discouragement. At eight o'clock, on that Sunday morning, the nuns, kneeling in their pious chapel, had heard the signal of alarm : at one, neither chapel nor convent remained to shelter them or their pupils. Yet hear what they have themselves testified of their feelings in these trying circumstances. " This calamity, although severe and unforeseen, hardly moved us, divine grace having so taken possession of our hearts at that moment, when God had given Himself to us in His Sacrament of love, that it was not possible for us to regret the loss of earthly goods."

Here, pity must give place to admiration. Such sentiments tell how fully the community had imbibed the spirit of its saintly foundress, or rather that they too were saints. None else could be capable of such detachment.

## CHAPTER XVIII

1687-1689

## RESTORATION OF THE MONASTERY

In the mean time, measures were taken to shelter the homeless Ursulines. It had been decided, at once, that eight would remain to guard the beloved site, and to effect the most urgent repairs, preparing the little mansion that was left them, to be the future residence of the community.

After High Mass at the cathedral was over, about half past twelve, the Bishop, Monseigneur de Saint-Valier, and the chaplain, Father Beschefer, came to escort the others to the Hôtel-Dieu, where they were received with the utmost cordiality. Entering by the hospital, they requested to be conducted to the chapel, where, on bended knees, they entoned the *Laudate*, to thank God for having accomplished His holy Will in them, by depriving them of every thing. Then they sang the *Memorare* to the Blessed Virgin, their Mother and principal Superior, to beg her assistance and protection. Finally, before accepting any further rites of hospitality, they assisted at the holy Sacrifice, offered for them by Father Beschefer, who had kindly delayed saying his mass till that hour "in order to console them more effectually." Happy souls! to whom the consolations of Heaven suffice: never will you be overcome by earthly trials!

In fact, the courage of our Ursulines seems not to have faltered one instant. Their income during half a century would not have sufficed to enable them to rebuild their monastery; yet, trusting in the assistance of Divine Providence, they resolved to attempt its reconstruction, and until that was accomplished, to live there amidst its ruins. The generos-



ity of friends, on every side, enabled them to effect the first of these purposes; their own generosity in suffering carried them through the second.

Let us group a few of the incidents that have been handed down to us of that period, during which our Mothers had to contend with the accumulated difficulties of poverty, sickness, and destitution.

A part of the community, as we have seen, had sung their perfect act of resignation at the chapel of the Hotel-Dieu, where they had found hospitality after that disastrous Sunday morning. Their kind hostesses did not forget, that the following day was the feast of St. Ursula, and made immediate preparations to have High Mass, vespers, sermon and benediction, in favor of their guests. The sermon proved to be a moving exhortation from Bishop de Saint-Valier, who after celebrating Mass for the Ursulines and giving them holy Communion, sought, as he said, to console himself, while condoling with them, and who seemed indeed more affected by the sad accident than they were. After such a proof of the delicate sentiments of the good *Hospitalières*, we are not surprised that the two communities lived like one, reciting their office, taking recreation, their meals, and serving the poor invalids together.

Some of our readers may be surprised to hear that the Ursulines were also seen at the Château St. Louis. It was deemed proper that the Mother Superior, with some of her Sisters, should pay her respects to the Marchioness de Denonville, their guides on the occasion being Madame de Villeray and Madame Bourdon. It is hardly necessary to say that they were received at the Governor's with all the kindness and cordiality imaginable. Taking leave of their friends, the

Marquis de Denonville and the Marchioness, at about five o'clock, they proceeded to the palace of the Intendant. Here, they were not less cordially welcomed than at the castle ; but they had yet another call to make. Bidding adieu to Madame Champigny, they followed the streets back to their *home* ; and, alighting from their carriage, they went in to wish a " good evening " to their Sisters, the eight who had been left in possession of the house of Madame de la Peltrie. When they at last entered the Hotel-Dieu at six o'clock, " the peace of the cloister seemed delightful after such a day of fatigue and dissipation ! "

On the 7th of November, the convent of the Ursulines, as the house of Madame de la Peltrie was now styled, was in readiness, and the exiles prepared to return. The charitable importunities of their kind hostesses were unavailing to retain them longer ; so, amid good wishes on the one side and sincere protestations of lasting gratitude on the other, they said farewell, though not without tears. Three of the good hospital-nuns were authorized to accompany the Ursulines, and visit with them the other religious institutions of the city. The walk, thus extended, took them first to the Seminary, where the illustrious Bishop Laval lived with his community of priests and levites, in the poverty, fervor and simplicity of the apostolic times. Thence, they passed to the gardens and to the Little Seminary, where the students obtained a holiday in their honor. The cathedral came next, then the college of the Jesuits. Finally, entering the chapel of the Congregation, they sang an anthem to the Blessed Virgin, and continued their way, always conducted by the Bishop, their Superior M. de Maizerets (of the Seminary), and Father Beschefer.

The procession had lengthened with the road, till it resembled a triumphal march. The door of their little convent, at last, opened before them, and the crowd disappeared as the nuns entered the narrow apartments provided for their reception. The walls had not grown wider, and if partitions had separated the lower story into a kitchen and a refectory, the other, above, retained its full dimensions, (thirty feet by twenty), in order to accommodate twenty-eight persons with a dormitory.

A little chapel and choir had been fashioned, not in the style of the Renaissance, but in that of the *Naissance*, the grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem. It was a small building which had formerly served as a barn or stable. This, with the other "improvements" around, seemed to move the company more to compassion than to admiration. "My good Sisters, I see every thing prepared here to make you suffer," remarked the kind-hearted Bishop. "For our part, says the annalist, our joy was apparent to all, so delighted were we to find ourselves again reunited." *Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum*. Yes! it is a good and pleasant thing for brethren (or sisters) to dwell together in unity."

If the hour of adversity is the hour to know one's friends, our Mothers had reason to congratulate themselves on the number, the liberality and devotedness of theirs. While the smoke was yet rising from the ruins of the monastery, the Bishop had addressed himself in their behalf to the faithful, assembled in the cathedral for High Mass. Soon after, he issued a circular, informing the clergy throughout the diocese of the accident "which, he said, interested the whole country, and was of itself sufficient to excite their parishioners,

through gratitude and affection, to render all the assistance in their power towards repairing the disaster."

For his part, he contributed, at once, three thousand francs ; and, during his absence in France, he pleaded the cause of his afflicted daughters so efficaciously that the annals name him as their chief benefactor in the re-establishment of their monastery. The Marquis de Denonville's first offering was a thousand francs ; while the Marchioness made it her duty to go from door to door through the city, collecting for her dear Ursulines, to whom she brought daily, with her sympathy, the fruit of her charity.

The Fathers of the Society of Jesus, after their first offering of a thousand francs, donated, for five or six times that value, in goods and provisions. The members of the Seminary and the Intendant contributed with equal generosity. The citizens of Quebec, and the principal families throughout the country, gave aid according to their means. The Ursulines of Paris and the other houses of the Order, the relatives of the nuns there, especially the LeMaire family, and the de Flecelles, again, on this occasion, as in 1651-52, sent liberal sums to the poor Ursulines in Canada.

The winter passed away in providing the most needful articles of clothing, and in plying diligently the needle in such dainty embroidery as would bring, by its sale, some profits to lessen the necessity for daily alms.

Early in spring, the labors of rebuilding were commenced, under the skilful direction of Father F. Raffeix S. J., while the nuns invited to their humble chapel the little girls of the city for the instructions of the first Communion. As soon as the snow commenced to disappear, they made preparations for opening a class for day-pupils, by putting up a sort of shed, near the spot where lately stood that precious memo-

rial of the past, the "old ash-tree."<sup>1</sup> This was no sooner in readiness than fifty or sixty pupils assembled, and the Ursulines found labor congenial to their profession.

But, as the adage tells: "Misfortunes never come single." If already the heat of summer rendered their narrow lodgings most uncomfortable, what would it be in sickness? A contagious malady, the measles, was raging in the city. After attacking the pupils, it fell upon the teachers, and it was necessary to have an infirmary. A small building, serving as a wash-house, was forthwith accommodated for this purpose, and thither the sick were removed and attended, till nearly the whole community had paid tribute to the unwelcome visitor. The month of September brought with it the mortal illness of the venerable Mother Cecile de la Croix, now seventy-eight years of age. Her vigorous constitution had enabled her to bear a large share of the hardships of the foundation in the early times, and to continue her services forty-eight years, edifying the community by her humility, her charity, and her fidelity to all the observances of the religious life. The offices that she regarded with dread, were those of assistant-superior and mistress of novices, to which she was called more than once, and for which she was well qualified, in every one's opinion but her own. She loved far better to be employed at the extern school, where the poorest of the children were her special delight. "In short, says the annalist, she was a true Ursuline."

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1.—That venerable relic of the primitive forest was still a magnificent tree at the 200th anniversary of the foundation of the convent (1839). It lost one of its principal branches a few years later, and, finally, in the month of August, 1868, was laid prostrate by a storm.

The ardors of a burning fever consumed what little remained of her strength, while during three weeks she was attended in that miserable hovel, with love and boundless compassion. It is the survivors we most pity, when for the bier of their beloved Mother, they could find no better place than the porch of that poor little chapel, no more fitting locality for her grave than the ruins of their former lovely choir! To add to the sadness of the burial ceremony, a heavy autumnal rain came pouring its waters over the funeral cortege, as they bore the dear remains across the open court to the last resting-place of the dead.

The generous resignation with which the nuns had accepted the affliction sent them in the burning of their monastery, seems to have extended its soothing influence to this whole period of privation and suffering. "During this year, says the annalist, in order to second the designs of divine Providence over us, each one strove to advance in virtue by the practice of mortification and penance. Daily prayers and thanksgivings were offered to God for the succor and aid He sent us, as well as to implore His protection for our benefactors. Among other prayers, the Litanies of the Saints were recited every day, with the suffrages marked for the Rogation-days. The anniversary of the conflagration, the 20th October, was a day of special devotion and fervor. In the morning there was general communion; in the afternoon, we went around the ruins in procession, singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, our Mother and Protectress. Our hopes have not been confounded, for our good Mother has so watched over us that even in our greatest distress, we have never been reduced to want for the necessities of life."

Meanwhile the busy scene presented by the plyers of the trowel, the plane, and the hammer, at their respective

occupations, gave hopes of better days. In November, the new building<sup>1</sup>, finished as to the exterior, offered one large hall, ready to be occupied. This was at once devoted to the use of the pupils, the annals marking with characteristic precision, that "twelve months and nineteen days after their accident, they were enabled to admit boarders again."

During the winter, the workmen continued their labors in the interior of the building with such success, that on the 18th of May (1688), the house was solemnly blessed, and dedicated to the Holy Family<sup>1</sup>. On the following day, the nuns were occupied in removing to their new apartments. It must have been a joyful exchange to them, especially to see the thirteen most aged among them provided with cells for their nightly rest, instead of a narrow space measured off by inches in a common dormitory.

The humble temporary chapel, after serving for Mass and the divine Office during eighteen months, after witnessing the profession of a fervent novice, Miss Juschereau, and the funeral of the venerable Mother Ste. Croix, the renovation of vows, and the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament several times, was abandoned for the large hall<sup>2</sup>, already mentioned, in the lower story of the new building. The restoration of the main building, which gave another chapel, with the apartments necessary for regular observance,

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1—This wing, 60 French feet by 25, was destined as a habitation for the nuns; the pupils occupied the "large hall" only till the next spring (May), when they removed to the apartments which the nuns then quitted, in the house of Madame de la Peltrie.

2—This apartment, beneath the community-hall which served as a chapel thirteen months, has become historical since its occupation by General Murray for the sessions of his council, military and civil, in 1759. Later, it was occupied as a laundry or clothes-room, until 1875.

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community-hall, refectory, infirmary, additional cells, &c., was accomplished in the course of the same year (1688).

The ancient choir was rebuilt and divided into class-rooms for the boarders in 1689<sup>1</sup>, and this permitted the house of Madame de la Peltrie to be occupied again as a school for the day-pupils.

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1—This building, as reconstructed in 1689, served for class-rooms, refectory, &c., for the boarders until 1834, when new apartments having been provided for them by an additional story the whole length of the main building, the old classes were occupied by the half-boarders. In 1874 this old building was demolished and replaced by another, of greater dimensions and four stories high.





## GLIMPSES OF THE MONASTERY

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### BOOK II

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#### DURING SEVENTY YEARS — 1689-1759

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#### CHAPTER I

1689

##### CLOSE OF THE FIRST HALF-CENTURY

The events we have had to record thus far have presented enough of "life's chequered scenes" to prove that this edifice, destined to be lasting, had for its firm foundation the sacred Wood of the Cross. The monastery, newly restored after a second burning, again sheltered the cloistered family, who felt they had much to be thankful for in the past, much to hope from the protecting care of Providence in the future. In their recent misfortune, they had experienced prompt and generous sympathy; all classes of society rejoiced to see the convent not only rebuilt, but enlarged<sup>1</sup>. The church, alone, had not risen from its ruins.

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1—The wing, called "La Sainte-Famille," had been extended towards the south-west, 30 feet by 38. It joined the main-building, affording a kitchen and its dependencies, an infirmary, etc. The corner-stone was laid on the 19th July, 1687, by Mademoiselle de Denonville, then a boarder, daughter of the Governor of the Colony.

The date of this restoration, moreover, coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the first Ursulines in Canada.

The community numbered now thirty-four members ; ten others, including the three foundresses, had, during that space of time, passed to their reward.

No other year in those early times seems to have been so fertile in vocations for the cloister, as 1689. Twice the touching ceremony of "taking the veil," was witnessed in the temporary chapel beneath the present community-hall. On both occasions, Bishop Saint-Valier officiated, assisted by his clergy and some of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus. The Marquis de Denonville, the Intendant, and their suite were also present, the new "brides of Jesus," being Miss Elizabeth d'Ailleboust and Miss Louise-Rose de Lanaudière, henceforth known as Mother Marie de la Croix and Mother St. Catherine.

After the ceremony was over, the company were further gratified by being allowed to visit the interior of the monastery ; those cells which, with their humble furniture, bare walls, and narrow door with wooden latch, still excite the curiosity, or admiration of the rare visitors permitted to behold them ; that community-hall, with its deep-channelled oaken wainscot, its plain benches around, instead of chairs, wearing yet much the same aspect as it did two hundred years ago. Of the refectory and chapel, we shall soon have further occasion to speak. So well did the company enjoy the treat, that it was almost six o'clock before the cloistered grounds, the park and gardens, had regained their wonted look of repose and quietude. The good nuns consoled themselves with the thought that their cloister would not long be thus infringed upon, their little chapel with the

part destined to the use of the public, being nearly in readiness for divine service.

Four other young ladies, at the early age of fifteen and sixteen, embalm the new novitiate with the fragrance of their noble sacrifice, before the close of that fiftieth year under consideration. These novices were the Misses Marie-Anne Robineau<sup>1</sup>, de Becancour, Marie Madeleine Gauthier de Comporté, Marie-Madeleine Drouard and Jeanne Chorel.

On another page of our old record, mention is made of the episcopal visit, which terminates to the mutual satisfaction of the Prelate and his spiritual daughters. At the close of the visitation the sacrament of confirmation was conferred upon a postulant and about twenty of the boarders, among whom were several little Indian girls. On the 23rd of June, the holy Sacrifice was offered for the last time in the temporary chapel under the community-hall, after which the Blessed Sacrament was borne, in ceremony, to the new chapel at the other extremity of the building<sup>2</sup>. The procession moved across the grounds through a winding avenue, bordered with young fir-trees and strewn with flowers. The nuns, bearing

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1—Miss Robineau, of Bécancour, daughter of Baron René Robineau, Officer of the Regiment of Turenne, Chevalier of the Order of St. Michael. Her mother belonged to the ancient and noble family LeNeuf de la Potherie.

Miss Gauthier de Comporté, daughter of P. Gauthier, Sieur de Comporté, and Grand Prévost of Quebec. Her sister, Marie-Anne de Comporté, made profession five years later.

Miss Drouard, of Quebec, took the name of Mother St. Michael, at the age of fifteen, and lived to the age of eighty-two.

Miss Chorel de St. Romain was soon joined in the novitiate by her sister Marie-Françoise, who was the first to bear the name of Mother Marie du Sacré-Cœur (1693).

2—The chapel here mentioned occupied the south-west end of the main building, with the adjoining apartment to serve as the choir, precisely as it had been arranged in the earlier times, before the building of a church by Madame de la Peltrie.

lighted tapers, led the way, followed by the boarders in holiday attire. The clergy preceded the Bishop, who bore with careful step the sacred ciborium, while the hymn *Pange lingua*, and the anthem, *O sacrum convivium*, gave expression to the sentiments of piety and devotion which animated their hearts. The first mass celebrated in that little sanctuary, destined to witness during thirty-four years, the fervor, the rejoicings, the alarms, and the trials of the Ursulines, was on the feast of St. John the Baptist, 1689.

Long since has that chapel ceased to witness the celebration of the sacred mysteries. Its original destination is but a picture of the fancy, evoking the records of the past. Let us turn, then, to other memorials of those early times, witnesses to the piety of our first nuns, which are still in good preservation.

Such of our readers as have ever made the convent their abode, have not failed to notice the ancient statues to which we allude; they are, apparently, the guardians of the "House of Jesus."

On the 7th of December of that jubilee year, 1689, the image of the Immaculate Virgin was transported to its sculptured and gilded niche, at the entrance of the community hall. Another, of St. Joseph, was placed, with the same piety, on the second landing of the great stairway in the centre of the building, known as "St. Augustine's stairs." The whole community walked in procession, singing hymns, while the stands, covered with flowers, on which the statues were placed, were borne to their respective stations.

How many times, during the space of two centuries, has the sight of those statues been to the inhabitants of the cloister, the signal of a quick thought sent winged to heaven; here,

by an *Ave Joseph*, there, by a *Tota pulchra es* to the Virgin full of grace and beauty ! And how can we recall the memory of our ancient Mothers, never too poor to find means to manifest their tender piety towards God and His Saints, without being moved by a generous impulse to follow closely in their footsteps, emulating the holy examples they have left us !

Yet all was not bright and peaceful in that year, 1689. In the history of Canada, with all its pages of terror and warfare, there are none darker with anxiety. The country seemed indeed on the brink of a total ruin. The Iroquois, far from being weakened or disheartened by the long war they had waged against the French and the allied Indian tribes, rose bolder and more aggressive after each encounter. The environs of Montreal were infested with straggling bands of the blood-thirsty foe. We shall not here revive the gloomy picture of the massacre of Lachine<sup>1</sup>, and the other feats of savage prowess, which rendered the year too sadly memorable ; but opening that old parchment-bound volume, our guide in revisiting the scenes of by-gone days, let us see what record of passing events is there inscribed.

A few days after the attack upon Lachine, the annalist writes :

" A terrifying report reached us that Three Rivers had been laid in blood and ashes by the Iroquois, who were ravaging all the country around. The news proved false, but a letter from the Governor, the Marquis de Denonville,

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1—In the year 1689, the Iroquois made a fearful onslaught upon the Island of Montreal with 1400 warriors. Shocking barbarities were perpetrated on this occasion, which is known in Canadian history as the " Massacre de Lachine." Within the brief space of one hour about 200 persons were cruelly butchered, and about the same number carried off to be subjected to captivity and torture.

received later, gave undoubted information that he had fifteen or sixteen hundred Iroquois to contend against; whilst another party, accompanied by two hundred English colonists, were waiting to fall upon Three Rivers and the other habitations. This news caused the greatest consternation at Quebec, there being only two hundred and forty men in the city capable of bearing arms.

"Major Prévost resolved to do all in his power to fortify the place. A fort was erected so near the monastery that the palisade passed through the court yard and garden. Sentinels were placed on guard at different stations in the city, and a patrol made the rounds day and night.

"Figure to yourself, continues the annalist, a city without walls or gates, whose inhabitants have gone to defend another place. But we have put our confidence in Him who alone can deliver us from the impending evils. For this reason we offer our prayers incessantly to implore the Divine protection. If God be for us, we have nothing to fear, but if left to our own resources, we are lost. This great tribulation excites every one to penitence. There are daily processions and other acts of piety, to appease the wrath of God, irritated by the sins of His people. On the feast of St. Augustine, we commenced the following devotions, for the preservation of the country, the humiliation of the Iroquois, and the general welfare of all classes of society

1<sup>o</sup> A weekly communion to be offered for these intentions.

2<sup>o</sup> The anthem, *O salutaris*, sung at mass after the elevation, and the *Salve Regina*, after Matins.

3<sup>o</sup> Five of the community, named each week, will offer prayers for the same intentions, as follows. Two will say the Office of the Immaculate Conception before the Blessed Sacrament; two others, the Office of St. Joseph; a lay-sister will say nine times the *Gloria Patri* and *Ave Maria*. All

the other penitential acts and good works of the community will be offered for the same ends. These practices of piety are to be continued the whole year."

Evidently, our nuns were not idle spectators of the state of public affairs. Like Moses on the Mount, they had recourse to prayer, while their brethren battled with the enemy: we know that, of old, the victory depended more on the prayer of Moses than on the valor of the Israelites. The Ursulines, in fact, had need, not only of pious zeal, but of courage also, for the enemy would not always be at a distance.

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## CHAPTER II

1690

### THE ALARMS OF WAR

When in the security of the present day, one surveys at leisure the magnificent panorama of the fertile and cultivated valley of the St. Lawrence, its scattered cottages and hamlets, peacefully nestling along the borders of the primeval forest; its thriving towns, reposing fearless of an enemy; the old Citadel of Quebec dismantled and its batteries at rest, it may not be an easy matter to bring to mind that far different picture it presented in by-gone days.

The occasional apparition of an Indian in his characteristic costume, may recall to mind those times when the whole land was peopled with a brave but savage race, that has now almost totally disappeared, and we think of the terror the name of the Iroquois once inspired. The sight of the English flag reminds us also of a terrible crisis, and we con-



trast the present security and happiness of the country with the formers tern and fearful realities of war and blood-shed.

The Ursulines had their share in the consternation which the name of the Indian and the Englishman, in turn, excited. That old volume of the annals seems, even now, to shudder in the recital it makes of the siege of Quebec, in 1690. Our readers will follow with interest the events already known to them by history, but which take the coloring of actuality as our annalist describes the scenes of which she was an eye-witness.

"On the 7th October, she writes, news was received that an English fleet of thirty-four vessels was approaching to take possession of the country. Already, on the second of the month, the enemy was in sight at Malbaie. This news created great alarm. Quebec could offer no resistance, there being no soldiers in the city, and but two hundred male citizens. The Governor, with all the troops, had gone to Montreal to defend that place against the Iroquois. A canoe was despatched immediately to carry him the tidings of this new danger.

"In the mean time, Major Prévost worked at the fortifications. Batteries were mounted in the Lower Town, the streets were barricaded, the inhabitants of the environs were called upon to aid in the defence. There was a deliberation about sending the two communities of nuns to Montreal; but as no boats could be procured, it was decided we should go to Lorette. Four of us were to be sent to make preparations for the rest; then, as soon as the enemy's sails should be in sight, the others were to follow. A place of concealment was contrived in the cellar, where we stowed away our linen, stuffs, &c. We commenced a novena to the Holy Angels and to St.

Joseph, the patron of the country, having mass said every day in his honor, seeking in every way to appease the Divine justice and to obtain the favor of God for the country.

"Our prayers were accepted; contrary winds were sent, so that in nine days the enemy's vessels did not advance as much as they might have done in half a day. When the fleet reached Quebec, which was on the morning of the 16th October, the city was prepared, having for its defence two thousand men, including the troops recalled from Montreal under Count de Frontenac, and the Canadian militia, under M. de Callières. The same day, the English captain sent a herald to summon the Governor to surrender. According to the insolent terms of the letter, not only the fort, arms, ammunition and stores, were to be delivered up, but all the inhabitants of the city were to surrender at discretion. One hour only was offered for deliberation.

"The Governor immediately gave the answer they deserved, namely: 'That God would not favor those who were traitors to their king<sup>1</sup> and their religion, and that he had no answer to give them, but by the mouth of his cannon.' The herald was dismissed without further ceremony and the next day the firing from the fleet commenced. On the 18th, a part of the English troops landing at Beauport, there was a skirmish between them and the French militia, with a loss for the enemy.

"The following days the cannonade was renewed, but with less effect. On the first day, a cannon-ball burst through a window-shutter and sash, and finally lodged at the bedside

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<sup>1</sup>—It will be remembered that James II had been driven from his kingdom, and William III called in to take his place on the throne of England.

of one of our boarders ; another passed through the apron of one of our sisters, carrying off the piece. Other balls fell in the garden, the parks and the court-yards, but, by the protection of Heaven, no person was injured. Our house was crowded with people, and the *externat* (house of M<sup>me</sup> de la Peltrie) was filled with furniture and merchandise, placed there for greater security. The boarders' department, the classes for the Indian girls, the refectory and novitiate, with our three cellars, were filled with the people of the city, women and children, so that we could hardly pass to and from our kitchen, but took our food standing, and in haste, like the Israelites when they ate the Paschal lamb.

" We passed the first night before the Blessed Sacrament, in prayer. The following nights, some took a little rest in the sacristy, others in their cells, remaining dressed, awaiting death at any moment. We had placed in the choir the statues of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, before which a taper was kept burning, while some of the Sisters were constantly praying there. We lent, on this occasion, our painting of the Holy Family, to be exposed on the steeple of the Cathedral, to bear witness that it was under their holy patronage that we were combating the enemy.

" Having attempted, in vain, to take the city by assault on the side of the Little River (the St. Charles), where they were vigorously repulsed by our Canadians, the enemy retreated to their damaged ships."

This was on the 21st of October.

The evil fortune of the invaders pursued them still, during their perilous navigation homeward. Several of their ships were lost, and hardships incredible, from want of food and the inclemency of the weather, attended the squadron to the

port of Boston, which they entered only six weeks after losing sight of Quebec.

"The retreat of the enemy left the country in great joy. The people sought to manifest their gratitude to Heaven, acknowledging they had no part in the victory, but that it was God's right Hand that had delivered us. For this end, the Bishop of Quebec ordered a procession to be made, in thanksgiving. The image of the Blessed Virgin was borne successively to the four churches, ending at the cathedral, where the *Te Deum* was sung. In the evening there were bonfires. Moreover, our prelate has decided that the chapel which is to be built in the Lower Town, shall bear the title of OUR LADY OF VICTORY, in fulfilment of a vow made to this effect. Every year, the fourth Sunday of October will be a commemorative feast; there will be a procession in honor of the Blessed Virgin on the same day."

Our readers know with what fidelity and fervor this anniversary is still celebrated. Happy the country that has marked its calendar by such festivals, which are kept after two centuries, in the spirit of their founders!

Not to interrupt her narration, our cloistered historian has reserved for another page her record of the festival of St. Ursula. It is in keeping with the spirit of those primitive times. The city was besieged by an enemy, the roar of their cannon, at various hours of the day, was heard so near that the balls rattled upon the roof and walls of the monastery. The danger was so real that the Blessed Sacrament was removed from the tabernacle; nevertheless the nuns sang their first vespers. The Breviary Office could not be recited, because their books had been stowed away with whatever else they held most precious; but in order not to defraud

Heaven of their accustomed tribute of prayer, they gave an hour more to meditation. On the festival, the Bishop was in their chapel to say mass and give them communion. At two o'clock P. M. they took their accustomed places in the choir to listen devoutly to a sermon, with the expectation that at four, a great battle would take place within sight of their windows.

The preacher (M. de la Colombière), after a panegyric of the virgin martyrs, seized the occasion to exhort his hearers to similar intrepidity in the approaching danger, congratulating them on the happiness of being called to follow so closely the footsteps of their illustrious patroness. He concluded his exhortation in this pathetic style, when the Bishop intoned that plaintive chant, "*Maria Mater gratiæ...Et mortis horâ suscipe,*" with such feeling that the good nuns might have believed their last hour had come. It is easy to imagine with what sentiments they received the blessing of our Lord during the Benediction service, at which the prelate officiated, closing the festal solemnity just as the roar of artillery recommenced.

Later, it was known that this last cannonade of the enemy was but a feint to cover their retreat, which they effected with great precipitation during the night. When the report of this victory reached the court of France, the conduct of Frontenac, and that of the officers and men under his command, was so highly appreciated, that the king ordered a medal to be struck in commemoration of the event.

Some of our readers may have seen this medal: it bears the following motto:

KEBECA LIBERATA, MDCXC; and on the other side:

FRANCIA IN NOVO ORBE VICTRIX.—*Quebec delivered, 1690.  
France victorious in the New World.*

## CHAPTER III

1695

MOTHER DE FLECELLES OF ST. ATHANASIOS

PARISIAN NUNS

Early in the history of the Monastery, we meet with the name of Mother St. Athanasios: our Ven. Mother Mary of the Incarnation, her contemporary, has left us an appreciation of her merit, in terms of the highest praise.

Called to govern the community during eighteen years, and to edify it by her virtues through her long career of more than half a century, her memory is still fresh among us, and is ever cherished with gratitude, esteem, and affection.

In reading of the vocation of Mother Mary of the Incarnation, we are struck with the conviction that divine Providence had prepared her in a special manner for her work; that, truly, the trials and the toils of preceding years were her "novitiate for Canada."

But such was not the case with Mother St. Athanasios. In her youth, she was the favored child of fortune, as well as of nature. Her family, the de Flecelles, held a distinguished rank, even in the polished circles of Parisian society.

Margaret, the pearl of that noble house, was placed, at an early age, in the boarding-school of the Ursuline convent in the *Faubourg St. Jacques*, (Paris), an institution then recently founded by Madame de Ste. Beuve, yet already flourishing and enjoying the highest reputation. Here, her rare talents were cultivated with success, at the same time that the excellent qualities of her heart were developed and fortified by the religious instructions and pious examples of her teachers. Cheerful and good-humored, modest and obliging,

graceful and engaging in her manners, the youthful Margaret was a general favorite, while the solidity of her judgment, her sincere and unaffected piety, enchained the hearts of her friends in the lasting bonds of esteem and affection.

Returning to the bosom of her family, fitted to become its ornament as she might have been its idol, she did not suffer her soul to be fettered by the silken cords of love and ease. She had heard the voice of grace, calling her to a life of self-abnegation and devotedness to the good of souls.

Waiting only to obtain the consent of her worthy parents, she hastened to present herself, at the age of seventeen, to the Superior of the Ursulines, in the same convent where she had received her education. Admitted to that novitiate where all was fervor, she pronounced her vows after two years — the usual period of probation — and continued her course with fresh ardor, aiming at the highest perfection. Already seven years had quickly passed away in the service of Him who has said that His "yoke is easy and His burden light," when the little missionary band, destined for Quebec, received hospitality in the "*Grand Couvent*" of Paris.

Mother Margaret of St. Athanasius does not appear to have been attracted by the sight of the Christian heroines to seek to share their enterprise, as were others of the community. No! her vocation to Canada, like that of her call to religion, was one of pure generosity, unaided by the sensible attraction of any special grace. God had permitted her soul to be visited by a season of desolation, as dark as it was trying.

In this interior conflict, the precise nature of which is not stated, the faithful spouse of Jesus abandons her fate more completely than ever to his mercy. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," said holy Job. The pious Ursuline resolves to do still more for Him, whose Hand presses so

heavily upon her breaking heart. She feels inspired with a heroic resolution, and vows to offer herself to her superior, to be sent to that little convent, devoted to the savage tribes in Canada. So generous an act obtained its immediate reward, in that "peace of the soul which passeth understanding." A strength, unknown to her before, fortified her will, and urged her to fulfil her engagement, sacrificing a second time her family and friends, with the Mother and Sisters scarcely less dear of that second home, where she had hoped to pass the remainder of her days. Such was the first vigorous step of Mother St. Athanasius in the rugged path to which she had committed herself.

Let us now introduce the amiable companion Providence had prepared for her, Mother Anne Le Bugle of St. Clare.

In her vocation, unlike Mother St. Athanasius, she is borne on the wings of a holy ardor, and deems the happiness to be chosen for the mission, lightly bought at the price of a final separation from her beloved parents and her community. Her heart is so consumed with zeal for the salvation of the benighted heathen of America, that she feels no longer bound by earthly ties; and we are forced to sympathize with her weeping parents more than with herself, when they at last, "for God's sake," as she had entreated, consent to let her depart.

Then she casts herself with an utter abandon into the arms of divine Providence, without solicitude for the present or alarm for the future. On her voyage, every thing turns out for the best: the ocean is always calm, the sea-breeze ever proves "mild and refreshing." As she nears the shore, "a clear sky is overhead; verdant groves and lovely flowers rejoice her sight." They reach Quebec, at the end of two months, (1540) without accident and she hastens to share the poverty



and privations of that little convent on the beach in the Lower Town<sup>1</sup>, It has a poor chapel which to her "looks devout;" within, she finds a "sweet solitude" where, with "most amiable and saintly Sisters," she lives in "wonderful peace and union." Her cheerfulness and filial trust in God fitted her for the trials of life, like the reed that, bending to the wind, is never crushed by the storm. This commencement was but a presage of the edification which the life of Mother St. Clare afforded, serving her Master, as she had resolved, with her whole heart, till he called her to her reward, thirty-six years later (1677).

The arrival of these beloved Parisian Mothers, seems to have been highly providential for the little convent of Quebec. It obtained the powerful aid and protection of that monastery, the mother-house of the Congregation of Paris, which being of older date than that of Tours, and situated near the centre of the Missions of the Society of Jesus, enjoyed greater facility for promoting the welfare of the new foundation.

The biographical notice of "our most honored and beloved Mother Margaret de Flecelles of St. Athanasius," describes her as a shining mirror of every virtue, nourishing her union with God by a special devotion to the Passion and to the Blessed Eucharist, assiduous in prayer, walking in the presence of God, in the constant exercise of that two-fold charity which is the abridgment of all perfection. If she still remembers the rich halls of the parental mansion, it is to provide for herself the poorest cell, the poorest raiment, and the most menial employments in the monastery. When her Sisters, pained to find her in the bake-house or in the

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<sup>1</sup>—The small house which served as a convent over three years, stood opposite the present church of Our Lady of Victory.

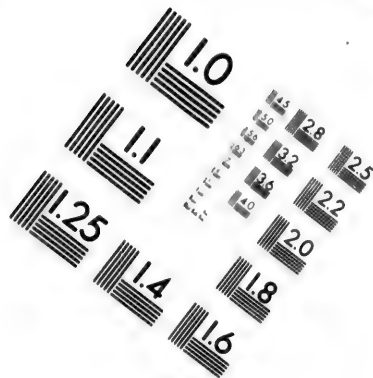
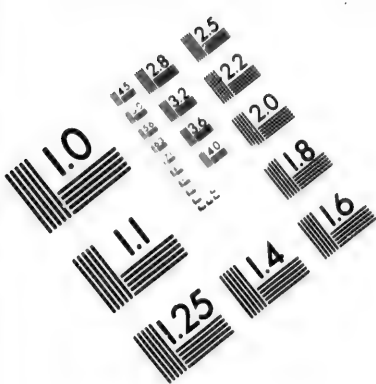
wash-room, would persuade her to spare herself, she insists that it is her consolation to be there, and the best preservative of her health. When, from the place of command, she descends to the rank of inferior, her obedience has only acquired the additional lustre of a more perfect submission; she is the willing servant of all who need her services, more humble in heart than it is possible for any outward circumstances to make her.

Once, only, did Mother St. Athanasius disoblige her Sisters, and give them cause for sorrow and complaint. It was when she sought and obtained of her ecclesiastical Superior, the Bishop of Quebec, the permission to withdraw her name at the election of a new superior of the monastery, wishing to enjoy the full benefit of her vow of obedience the rest of her days.

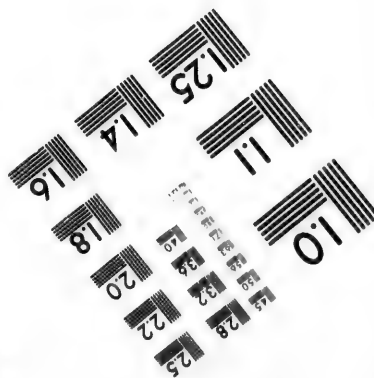
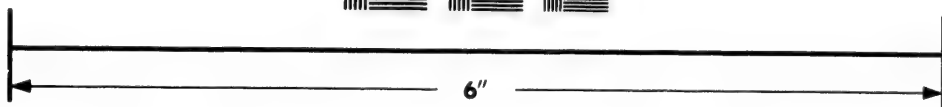
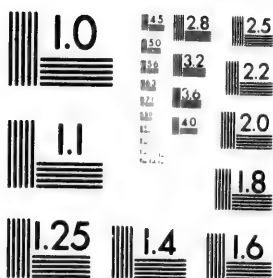
Guided in this demand by her humility, she found, from the same motive, abundant cause of confusion, witnessing the affliction of her Sisters, and by their distress knowing truly how very dear she was to them.

There would be much to add here, of her zeal for the instruction of youth, a task from which she would never willingly be exempted, unless it were in her old age, the last six months of her life; of her detachment, never suffering herself to be personally benefited by the many rich donations of her family; of her penitential spirit, her mortification, her zeal for the conversion of sinners, and particularly for that of the poor Indians. But let us conclude by citing from the annals the details of the last few days of her life.

"Our venerable Mother Margaret de Flecelles of St. Athanasius, laden with years and rich in merits, fell ill on the 28th of May, 1695, in the eighty-first year of her age. Rising as usual, at four o'clock, she had gone to the choir to



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pray before the Blessed Sacrament. An hour later, the infirmarian perceiving that she was feeble, conducted her to the infirmary and urged her to take a little repose. 'Oh! this will be nothing,' said the venerable patient; and in the afternoon, returning to the choir, she received the sacrament of penance in preparation for the feast of the morrow, the Holy Trinity. After communion the next morning, and after assisting at an assembly in chapter at nine o'clock, she took her bed to rise no more. During three days, her vigorous constitution afforded hopes that the fever which was consuming her might abate, but on Wednesday the symptoms of approaching dissolution appeared. Mother St. Athanasius knowing the danger, asked for the last sacraments, and received them with exemplary piety.

"Although her sufferings were great, and her soul absorbed in God, she still was attentive to all around her, receiving the visits of her Sisters with admirable kindness and cordiality.

"Perceiving that her lips were dry and parched with fever, one of us remarked it to her, asking if she would not drink to allay her thirst. She was answered by these words so full of meaning: 'I have another thirst which cannot be allayed.' The Superior, Mother Mary of the Angels, seated by her bedside, entering into the thought, added: 'You thirst, dear Mother, to glorify God, to suffer for His love, to gain souls to His service.' To this the venerable Mother replied with earnestness: 'Yes, yes! I thirst to glorify God, and to love Him.' Then, with the same fervor, she exclaimed, in the words of the Psalmist: 'For thee my soul hath thirsted! In a desert land, and where no water is; so, in the sanctuary have I come before thee, O God, to see thy power and thy glory.'"

The last moments of her life were passed in that sweet and intimate communion with God which was habitual to

her, till, pronouncing three times the holy name of Jesus, she gently gave up her soul to Him who made it. This was on the third of June, 1695, the sixty-third anniversary of her religious profession.

“ Mother St. Athanasius will ever be regarded as a signal benefactress of this Monastery. God alone knows how much we are indebted to her. We humbly hope she already enjoys her reward in the happiness of heaven. Her many virtues and the affection we bore her render us most sensible to her loss, and her memory will ever be held dear among us.”

In closing this slight tribute to the memory of our two first Parisian Mothers, we may remind our readers of the three others of the same Congregation, who were welcomed to Quebec in 1671 : Mother Marie Le Maire of the Angels, Mother Marie Drouet of Jesus, and Mother Marie Gibault du Breuil of St. Joseph.

Thirteen years previous to the decease of Mother St. Athanasius, 1682, the Constitutions of the Ursulines of Paris, by the advice of the Bishop, had been adopted by the community of Quebec. These constitutions, published first in 1623, and reprinted with some slight amendments a few years after, bear the impress of their origin, the finger of God guiding the hand of His Saints. Composed by persons of the highest merit, deeply versed in theology and in the knowledge of the human heart, every chapter and every sentence was made the subject of careful examination, and tested by being put in practice, before it finally received the seal of episcopal approbation. The experience of two hundred years has but rendered those constitutions more precious and venerable in this Monastery, where they are still in full force, with such modifications only as the circumstances of the times have required, and the proper authority sanctioned.

## CHAPTER IV

1697

## THE URSULINE CONVENT OF THREE RIVERS

Quebec had made provision from an early date for the two classes of society, the most helpless and the most in need of succor, children and the poor infirm. The College of the Jesuits, the Ursuline Convent and the Hotel-Dieu grew up with the rising city: the theological Seminary, with its "Little seminary" for students, was founded by Bishop Laval, in 1663; the General Hospital, by Bishop Saint-Valier, in 1692. These were all flourishing institutions at the close of the century.

Montreal had also, from a period nearly coëval with its first settlement, welcomed the heroic Mademoiselle Manse, and the devoted Marguerite Bourgeois. The former endowed *Ville-Marie* with its hospital; the latter, with an institution for female youth, the Congregation of Our Lady (1653); the Seminary of St. Sulpice, founded in 1677, offered the advantages of a Christian education to youth of the other sex.

Three Rivers, which from the beginning of the colony was regarded as an important post, and which received a permanent settlement with a local governor, in 1645, had not, at the end of sixty years, an institution either of education or of charity, beyond what the mission of the good Jesuits and the Franciscan Fathers afforded.

This want had no doubt seriously retarded the prosperity and importance of the rising city, whatever may have been said by a late author of the folly of founding an hospital, almost contemporary with the settlement of a country.

The zealous prelate who had endowed Quebec with its second hospital, consulted with the local Governor of Three Rivers, M. Rigaud de Vaudreuil, and it was decided that one establishment, at least, should be undertaken. Unwilling, nevertheless, to leave the sick and infirm unprovided for, he conceived the possibility of uniting the two works of mercy in one institution. Ursulines would teach; it is an indispensable article of their constitutions: but they could also, by episcopal authority, attend to the wants of the sick, in a part of the monastery to be called *the Hospital*. The project was new and untried; it is an additional proof of the zeal and spirit of sacrifice of our ancient Mothers, when they accept a foundation on these conditions.

A mansion on the margin of the St. Lawrence had been built for the residence of the Governor: the Bishop proposed to purchase it, if it would be found suitable for a convent. This point being left to the decision of the nuns, they must needs make the journey to see it. Mother Le Maire of the Angels with the newly appointed Superior, Mother Marie Drouet of Jesus, and a lay-sister, issuing from the cloister, was met by the Governor of Three Rivers, M. de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, Bishop Saint-Valier, and M. de Montigny, of the Seminary of Quebec, the ecclesiastical Superior of the monastery. The voyage was without accident, and business was settled to the satisfaction of the parties concerned, the contract passed, and the germ of a future community planted. It was plain that the new foundation would not have to endure the hardships and privations which had attended that of Quebec; but it is possible there will be other trials, for the works of Heaven are ever built upon the cross.

A few days later, there is another parting scene at the Ursulines of Quebec. Mother Mary of the Angels stands in readiness to conduct an Assistant-superior, Mother Le Vail-



lant of St. Cecile,<sup>1</sup> and two more of her daughters, to the new convent: Mother Marie Amiot of the Conception, and Mother St. Michael have been chosen. But let us join the little colony, the day preceding their departure from the dear monastery, when they go forth to pay their farewell visits to their friends in the city.

Their first station is at the castle, where they offer their respects to the veteran Count de Frontenac, and receive his parting wishes. They next visit the new monastery of the Recollets, and the Bishop's palace, where a most cordial and paternal reception awaited them. The eminent prelate conducted them himself to the Seminary, to present their homage to the venerable Bishop Laval, and the members of his community. Here, again, all was cordiality, and the most obliging testimonies of good will were shown. Thence, M. de Montigny led the way to the College of the Jesuit Fathers, whose hospitality was displayed by a collation, of which the nuns must partake, before they proceed to the Hotel-Dieu.

The scene here may easily be imagined. For some, it was the meeting of old schoolmates and early friends; for others, the cherished hostesses who had received with such sympathy, eleven years before, a community without a shelter.

But let us hasten on, for at the Intendant's palace Monsieur and Madame Champigny, old friends of the monastery, are waiting to give a hearty welcome to these rare visitants.

At the newly-founded general Hospital, they are expected. Is there not, indeed, a new tie added to their friendship by

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1—Mother St. Cecile, a person of rare merit, had but lately arrived from her Convent in Bayeux, France. She lived only two years after joining the Ursulines of Three Rivers.

the adoption of the title of *hospitalières*, added to that of Ursulines? The day was scarcely long enough for all these demonstrations of interest and kindness. The following morning, at an early hour, we find our missionary Sisters hastening their departure, lest the farewell embrace should move them too deeply. They alight from the carriage only to get their worthy prelate's blessing; then, descending Mountain Street to the Lower Town, they embark for their future home in Three Rivers.

Another voyage up the river, in the leisurely style of those days, gives Mother Mary of the Angels an opportunity to accustom herself to the features of that landscape, which still strikes the beholder with its grandeur and beauty. The lovely borders of the Seine would have brought her pleasing reminiscences of her youthful days; the St. Lawrence carried her back to the first time she had beheld, a quarter of a century previous, the wild scenery of her adopted country.

Our limits will not permit us to follow them further, unless it be to see the return, three years later, of one of these young nuns, Mother Mary of the Conception, whose absence had taken the light from her mother's hearth. Mrs Amiot had made a great sacrifice, in giving her daughter to the Ursulines of Quebec, but she had counted on the pleasure of seeing her, from time to time, in the house where she had consecrated herself to God. Pleading her cause with a mother's eloquence, she moved the prelate to decide upon recalling her to Quebec. Here, her mission extended to long and useful years, as our annals show.

In the spring of 1699, we find Mother Mary of the Angels returning to Three Rivers as Superior. The Bishop and the ecclesiastical Superior are there to receive the vows of five novices, and give the veil to another. Thus the community

numbered eleven members, four of whom were professed in Quebec.

The generous founder, Bishop de Saint-Valier, spared no pains, economising even upon his personal expenses to assure the prosperity of an institution whose usefulness he fully appreciated. During the yet perilous period of its foundation, Mother Mary of the Angels writes: "I may be blamed for having undertaken this work, but after the proofs I have had that it is the will of God, I cannot repent of the experiment. If I have erred it is in common with persons of various rank and condition, who are more enlightened than I am; and should God permit it, I shall witness the failure of the enterprise as cheerfully as its success, for I desire nothing but the accomplishment of the will of Heaven."

With sentiments like these in the foundress of the new monastery, it is not surprising that the blessing of God rested upon it. Superiors, already exercised in the difficult art of governing well, like Mother Le Maire of the Angels, Mother Marie Drouet of Jesus and Mother St. Teresa, were deputed from Quebec by the Bishop to guide the young community, until, in 1731, it was found capable of subsisting by itself. Ten years previous, it is mentioned by the historian, Charlevoix, as a "flourishing monastery, composed of forty Ursuline nuns, who have the care of a fine hospital, in addition to the labors of their institute."

The trials which were spared in the commencement, were reserved for a later day. In 1752, the noble mansion, which had sheltered the devoted Ursulines in their double mission of charity during fifty-five years, became, in the space of four hours, the prey of a destructive conflagration. The same fire enveloped a part of the town in a like misfortune.

Hospitality was offered to the nuns by the Franciscan Fathers, who gave up their house, retiring to a smaller one, in

order to accommodate a community in distress. An appeal to the public in favor of the victims of the conflagration, was followed by a gradual restoration of the ruined town. The convent was rebuilt in the course of the following year, Bishop de Pontbriand, in person, overseeing the labors of the reconstruction, lodging in the servants' house and paying the workmen from his own purse. The eminent Prelate died seven years later, with the glory of having accomplished to the letter the Gospel counsel of bestowing his goods upon the poor, that he might have a treasure in heaven. He is justly considered as the second founder of the Ursulines of Three Rivers. After a lapse of another half century, a second disaster called for a similar devotedness and generosity on the part of another bishop; but there are details connected with that event which, to avoid repetitions, must be reserved for a future page.

Let us not delay however to proclaim: Honor to the Institution, which during two hundred years has rendered services of inappreciable value to all classes of society, both by its well-conducted hospital and by its flourishing educational department!

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## CHAPTER V

1700

FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART ESTABLISHED

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is no longer a practice reserved to a few pious souls, who, like a St. Gertrude, a St. Catherine, a Saint Francis of Sales, or like our

own Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation, have known, in their silent communion with Heaven, that the graces and gifts from on high flow most abundantly through that sacred channel.

Since that auspicious day, when, in the solitary cloister of Paray-le-Monial, (1675) the voice of inspiration was heard, directing this devotion to be made public and extended to all the faithful, it has gradually taken root ; the fair tree has grown, its branches have spread, its delicious fruit has been offered to every palate.

But the finger of God is apt to move slowly, while it leaves its bright and indelible trace. Thus it was, that the decree for the celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart throughout the Church, which has filled all Christendom with joy, was delayed two full centuries ; but issued at last from the heart of the illustrious Pontiff, the well-beloved Holy Father, Pope Pius IX.

Canada may well exult in having understood and accepted the blessed, consoling devotion, as soon as it was made known. If it met with opposition in some parts of Europe, it found none here.

It is not surprising that the feast of the Sacred Heart, with the other practices of adoration, reparation and special love which belong to it, first found a shrine in that spot where Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation had so often prayed, offering her petitions to the Eternal Father on the living altar of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and where her daughters had since labored to keep alive the flame she had once kindled.

During the thirty-three years of Mother Mary's sojourn in Canada, she had each day lifted up her great soul to God, in that ardent prayer : " It is through the Heart of My Jesus,

my way, my truth and my life, that I approach thee, O Eternal Father," that prayer which, to day, warms thousands of hearts, happy to learn, from its burning accents, the secret of obtaining most efficaciously those graces which have been purchased for us by the sufferings of our Saviour, but which must be sought for in an acceptable manner, ere they are bestowed upon us.

The daughters of Mother Mary of the Incarnation, imbued with her spirit of zeal and devotedness, adopted as naturally, not only her sentiments, but even the expressions that were so familiar to her. Thus, we meet throughout her numerous letters greetings like these: "I salute you in the Sacred Heart of my Divine Spouse;" "I offer you daily to the Eternal Father on the sacred altar of the Heart of Jesus, &c." Similar expressions occur in a letter written by one of the nuns from Paris, a short time after she had reached the monastery of Quebec: "I entreat you to meet me often in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, beseeching Him to accomplish His holy will in me. It is there I embrace you, &c."

If as yet this devotion had not its exterior manifestations as was revealed later to Blessed Margaret-Mary, its spirit was latent here, in every heart, and only needed a signal to burst forth. As early as 1692, we find the name of "Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart" bestowed upon a novice. In 1699, while yet the practices of piety which are now so familiar to all Catholics, were scarcely known in Europe beyond the cloister-walls of Paray-le-Monial, the Superior of our monastery, Mother Mary of the Angels, consults her nuns in chapter, and with their advice, the first Friday of the month is set apart for the act of reparation to the Sacred Heart.

In the following June, the first Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi was observed as a feast of first class, with

High Mass, Vespers and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The festival was established, and never can the Ursulines of Quebec be sufficiently grateful to God for having chosen their chapel as the first, and during many years the only sanctuary in Canada, where the Sacred Heart received that public tribute of adoration, love and reparation which Our Lord is pleased to accept from His weak and erring creatures.

If the homes of genius and the haunts of learning affect the spirit with a sort of fascination, what must be the influence of those pious fanes, those holy places, where the pure in heart have received the visits of angels, nay of the Lord of angels, and have conversed with God in the manner most acceptable to his Divine Majesty !

And what is more touching for us, inhabitants of the Old Monastery, is to see in what a poor and humble shrine our Divine Lord, during fifteen years, deigned to accept the homage of his servants.

Let us re-people in imagination, that little chapel,<sup>1</sup> long abandoned but which must ever be sacred in our eyes.

Entering, while some pious members of the Confraternity are engaged in performing their stated "hour of adoration,"<sup>2</sup> we behold them, oblivious of the world, its cares or its enjoyments: their eyes are closed in meditation, or fixed upon the tabernacle, where faith pierces the mysterious veils and shows

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1—This chapel has lately been restored for private devotions, under the title of Chapel of the Sacred Heart.

2—In the original Association of the Sacred Heart, each member was expected to pass an hour in prayer, in presence of the Blessed Sacrament, on one day in the year, as specified in the ticket of admission.

the Saviour, displaying in proof of his love, that ardent furnace, his own divine Heart. Yes! "God has so loved the world," and shall we not return love for love?

Many adorers are present, perhaps, although it is not the festival of the Sacred Heart, for each great feast of the year brings a certain number of worshippers. The highest kneel beside the lowest before their common God.

But who shall tell with what sentiments the nuns, who had so long practised the devotion of the Venerable Foundress, welcomed that first Feast of the Sacred Heart! Entering their little choir, with holy joy, they adore "in spirit and in truth." Now, it is the aged Mother St. Ignatius (Charlotte Barré), who seems to have but waited for the triumph of this precious devotion, to sing her "*Nunc dimittis*." Now, it is Mother St. Agnes, just elected Superior, with some of those ten nuns still living, who like herself, have learned the secret of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, with the lessons of religious perfection, from the lips of the Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation.

But when the fair proportions of our present church arose (1723), to replace that little chapel, it was a welcome exchange. Then the artistic taste of the nuns was called in requisition, and they vied with each other in adorning the sanctuary, especially the altar of the Sacred Heart. Not a few of our good Mothers are commended in their obituaries, for their zeal in decorating that favorite shrine, over which the spirit of the Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation seems still to brood.

New members of the Association have been added from year to year, while volume after volume has been filled with the names of the best and the highest in rank and virtue, throughout the land.



A glance at the early registers shows us such names as the following : Bishop Saint-Valier, whose name heads the list ; the Marquis de Vaudreuil ; the Chevalier de Repentigny, des Meloises, de Villedonné, de Contrecoeur, d'Argenteuil, de Lanaudière, etc. The Marchioness de Vaudreuil, and her sister Madame Taschereau ; Mesdames de la Gorgendière, de Verchères de St. Ours, de Léry, de Gaspé, de Salaberry ; the Baroness de Longueuil, and many others.

Now it is a long list of young girls ; for, of course, no pupil would leave the Monastery without entering into the Association, so dear to her convent Mothers. As we examine those long pages of names, priests and missionaries, magistrates and lawyers, officers and soldiers ; here, whole parishes : there, congregations or families ; the thought naturally arises : Were not the people of Canada, in that eighteenth century, preparing for themselves by these most salutary practices of piety, a means to escape the deluge of woes that was about to inundate the mother-country, and thus to preserve, yet a while, the spirit of the ages of faith, when the acknowledged object of life was to know God, and to advance daily in the path that leads to Heaven ?

And, if our Lord himself has promised to those who establish, practise and propagate, the devotion to the Sacred Heart, "peace and concord, fervor in the service of God, consolation in troubles and trials, with a calm confidence in the hour of death," need we look further for the source and origin of all the graces and blessings bestowed upon this Monastery since its foundation to the present day ?

## CHAPTER VI

## THE LAST SURVIVOR OF 1639

"On the 22d January 1701, our dear Mother St. Ignatius witnessed the dawn of the great day of eternity, ardently desiring her last hour, in order to end, as she said, her sinful life, and to be united to her God. She expired in admirable sentiments of piety and joy, her last act being to press the crucifix tenderly to her dying lips.

"She was eighty-one years of age, having passed fifty-five in religion."

Thus concludes, after a long enumeration of her virtues, the biographical notice of Miss Charlotte Barré, the first professed of the Ursulines of Quebec. This name carries us back to the time of Madame de la Peltrie, and reminds us of scenes worthy of being portrayed before our readers.

It is not an every-day occurrence to meet with instances of magnanimity, such as Miss Barré, at the age of nineteen, was enabled to display, and which won her valuable and prolonged services to this monastery.

Born in the town of Azay, near Tours, in France, of truly Christian parents, Charlotte, at the age of thirteen, had already found within her heart an immense desire to consume her life in the service of God, for the salvation of souls; but how, or where? That was the secret of divine Providence. Her piety seems to have run in the smooth channels of fervor and peace, when, at the age of nineteen, she is sent one day, by her director, Father Salin, to introduce herself to Mother Mary of the Incarnation and Madame de la Peltrie. From them she hears of the enterprise they have in

view, and learns that Madame de la Peltrie, disappointed in a companion who had promised to accompany her, is in search of another. To the question: "Are you willing to go with us to Canada?" Miss Barré replies: "All my desire is to consecrate myself to God, and I shall most gladly embrace this offer, which will afford me an opportunity of risking my life for Him."

Like the Apostles, she obeys the call of the Divine Master without hesitation, unmoved by the urgent solicitations of her family who would have retained her. There was indeed no time for delay, the vessels being ready to sail, and the only favor the generous girl requested, was to see and open her trunk before it was carried off with the other baggage, in order to return by some trust-worthy person, an article of value which she was keeping for a friend.

Madame de la Peltrie knew from this moment what a treasure she possessed. She was happy to retain her, and promised to facilitate later her entrance into the convent which they were going to establish, by paying her dowry. Charlotte, on the other hand, was overwhelmed with the conviction of her own unworthiness, and unable to understand how it was that God had placed her in the company of Saints, calling her to share the labors, the merits, and the glory of so sublime an enterprise. In these sentiments, she humbly accompanied Madame de la Peltrie wherever she went, as long as her services were required. Then as a novice, in 1646, she applied herself with fervor to fulfil the new duties that devolved upon her, aiming at nothing less than a perfect imitation of the Divine Saviour in his life of obedience and mortification. Her zeal for the instruction of youth, and her talent for teaching, her aptitude for every other office in the

community, rendered her most useful during her long career, while her kindness, her universal charity, her amiability, won her as much love as esteem.

The magnanimity of which she had given proof in bidding adieu to her home and country for God's sake, without a sigh, did not give place to love of ease and comfort in later years. If she once rushed into the flames, as we have seen, to save those children who, in the conflagration of the monastery were exposed to perish, she never on any occasion spared herself when they were crosses to be borne or hardships to be endured. Whether she met with many of these, can best be known by those who have read at length the history of the monastery during the first sixty years of its existence.

One that truly loves God never says: "It is enough," when there is question of corresponding to grace in the practice of virtue. "This generous soul, says the annalist, following the example of her Divine Spouse, who calls himself the "hidden God," had no other ambition but to be unknown and forgotten, treating her body as her greatest enemy, seldom approaching the fire even in the extreme rigors of winter, abstaining from food so far that she may be said to have fasted continually, refusing herself the most innocent satisfaction. Whatever leisure remained to her after the numerous occupations was given to prayer. Hastening to the foot of the altar, prostrate in the humble attitude of the publican in the Gospel, she seemed lost in the consciousness of the presence of God."

The long career of Mother St. Ignatius, who had crossed the Atlantic with our first Mothers and who knew every incident of those strange early times, must have furnished a strong link in the chain of traditions that have come down to us. As we have already stated, she was the first professed

of the Convent of Quebec. Twenty-six younger Sisters surrounded her death-bed. One of these, who had also seen Mother St. Athanasius, Mother Genevieve Boucher of St. Peter, prolonged her vigorous existence till 1765, having passed seventy-two years in the community. At that date, we find, among others, Mother Louise Taschereau of St. Francis Xavier, who was still living in 1825, and consequently known to the aged Mothers, who have imparted to us the precious traditions once derived from the venerable Mothers St. Athanasius and St. Ignatius.

Doubtless in those former times, as at the present day, it was a pleasure for the younger members to surround the aged, seeking wisdom in the company of those whose minds have been enriched by the experience of multiplied years. It is in this manner that many points of valuable information, many interesting anecdotes which have eluded the notice of the cloistered historian, are perpetuated and finally recorded.

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## CHAPTER VII

1700-1713

### DAWN OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

There are some gloomy pages on our old register, at the beginning of the 18th century. Within the space of thirteen years, famine, pestilence and war, alternately menace, or invade the colony; and on such occasions the Ursulines necessarily have their share in the common misfortunes. The scant and blighted harvest of 1700, was followed by a scarcity bordering on starvation; while an epidemy, as unknown to the medical art as it was fatal in its attacks,

augmented and rendered more poignant the general distress. There were not enough people in health to have care of the sick, nor priests enough to attend the dying and bury the dead.

The convent escaped the famine, but paid its tribute to the cruel malady. So many of the nuns were attacked by the fever, that the infirmary not sufficing to lodge the sick, it was necessary to take care of them in their cells, those who waited on the others being almost as ill as their patients. The two victims of this epidemic were the mistress of novices, Mother Bourdon of St. Joseph, and the charitable infirmarian, Mother Boutet of St. Augustine.

Two years later, another malady, ever dreaded in proportion as it is known, the small-pox, made still greater ravages, carrying off, it is said, in the space of a few months, one fourth of the inhabitants of Quebec, making victims in every house, as well as in the religious communities.

In the monastery, every precaution had been taken to keep the unwelcome visitor at a distance, and with success until it had raged during six weeks in town. It penetrated, at last, from the adjacent church where the people had come in procession to offer prayers and perform their devotions. A lay-sister and several boarders were first attacked; a few days later, the list included seventeen nuns and thirty-seven boarders.

In the lodgings of the servant-men, out of seven, one alone remained in health to wait upon his companions. The school-house of the externs (Madame de la Peltrie's house) was transformed into a hospital for the sick boarders; the infirmary and novitiate were filled with the sick nuns. Class-duties were suspended, it being impossible to find teachers while so many needed attendance night and day. There were

besides, other and more sorrowful duties to be performed. Three among the nuns, all of them young, were in the space of ten days consigned to the tomb, with the usual mournful rites, but without the ringing of bells, lest that tribute to the departed, should overpower the poor patients yet struggling with the fearful disease. The city authorities had been compelled to issue an order, forbidding to ring for funerals, the oft-repeated knell having so affected several persons as to hasten their death.

After another respite of two years, the winter months pass again (1706), in bestowing compassionate cares upon the sick. Seven or eight patients were confined to their bed all winter. It was a strange intermittent fever, requiring night-watchers, and attentions of every kind.

Other epidemics appear again in 1709 and 1711, continuing to depopulate the colony. On these occasions there was much suffering, but no death occurred among the inmates of the cloister. Though our pen is weary of so mournful a page, we have yet to enumerate other calamities which befell the city and the country, during that period of twelve or thirteen years, at the beginning of the century. If these did not regard our nuns personally, they shared them by sympathy and compassion.

Let us mention, first, the conflagration of the Seminary of Quebec, 1701, while the professors were absent at St. Michael's with the students : then another fire, four years later, when, considering the recent improvements, the loss was greater than on the preceding occasion. The buildings were all nearly finished, when a carpenter, carelessly smoking in the midst of shavings, the falling of a spark was the cause of a second disaster. The details are all duly consigned in our annals, with expressions of condolence, and regret at not

being able to lend any assistance in the restoration of an institution so precious to the colony. They do not forget the venerable Bishop Laval, whose affliction must have been great, if it was in proportion to the interest he bore that institution, which he had founded and watched over during forty years of his episcopacy.

Other events recorded, filling several pages of the annals are: the captivity of Bishop Saint-Valier, detained nine years (1704-1713) as a prisoner of war in the Tower of London. Then, in 1709, a scarcity, bordering on famine, caused by a failure in the grain crop, ravaged by an army of caterpillars; the menace of war (1710, 11), ever becoming louder and more alarming, while the military preparations to defend the city, commenced in 1689, in the immediate vicinity of the monastery, were continued, to the great annoyance of the inhabitants of the cloister.

Here is certainly a picture sufficiently gloomy, yet never darkened by despondency. The nuns had put their trust in God, and consequently they were not without consolation. In fact, the life of a good religious, a life in God and for God, has an intrinsic joyousness of its own, independent of all outward circumstances.

Our Mothers were joined by several aspirants to the religious life during this period, as may be seen by referring to the list of entries. The classes were interrupted but once; and with young girls to instruct, Ursulines have a consciousness of well-doing which must render them happy.

Our readers remember how providentially for Canada that dreaded invasion of 1711, combined with so much apparent ability on the part of the New England colonists, came to naught; a powerful fleet having been held in check by dark fogs and strong winds till, with the loss of eight hundred



men by shipwreck, the discomfited invaders withdrew without even seeing the heights of Cape Diamond, or meeting with any other enemy but their own adverse fortune.

This event was recorded to posterity by the pious colonists, who in memory of Heaven's protector, erected an enduring monument to testify their gratitude. The votive church of Our Lady of Victory received the addition of a graceful portico, reared by public contribution, while its title was changed to that of "Our Lady of Victories."

But these long years, so beset with difficulties, were drawing to a close. The treaty of Utrecht (1713), settling many political differences, was favorable to peace in America. This treaty had also set free, after his long imprisonment, the illustrious prelate, Bishop Saint-Valier; and we share the glad anticipations of better times with which the "joyous firing of the cannon" announces his arrival.

"All the population hastened to the wharf to welcome the venerated Pastor, and conduct him in triumph, while the chime of bells and the roar of artillery mingled with their shouts of joy.

"In the course of the afternoon, adds the annalist (August 18th, 1713), we had the pleasure of seeing our good Bishop and hearing him express his joy. For our part, great is our gratitude to the God of goodness who has vouchsafed to grant us such consolation after our long and heavy trials."

## CHAPTER VIII

## THE THREE CAPTIVES

MISS WHEELWRIGHT BECOMES AN URSULINE

1714

On reading the early history of New England or of Canada, who has not shuddered at the recital of the atrocities of Indian warfare, the revolting feats of savage prowess, the merciless use of scalping-knife and tomahawk, the fiendish cruelties exercised upon a fallen enemy. Unfortunate were the captives whose lives were spared only to endure prolonged tortures and sufferings!

These were the customs of war among the aborigenes of America. What shall we say to justify the devastation and blood-shed that attend the warfare of even civilized nations?

But this is a question foreign to our subject.

Among the Indians, another class of captives were treated in a different manner: and thus it is that our annals and traditions afford us the means of tracing the merciful Hand of God, accomplishing that truly divine work of "bringing good out of evil," in the fate of three of these captives of war.

Near the close of the seventeenth century, in one of the border settlements in Maine, lived one of the descendants of the Puritan leader, John Wheelwright<sup>1</sup>, who had followed his co-religionists to Boston, in 1636.

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1—Banished from Boston for his religious opinions, Wheelwright was a pioneer in the frontier settlements of Exeter, N. H. and Wells, Maine. John Wheelwright, the father of our Esther, was grandson of the Puritan minister, Wheelwright, and Miss Baker affirms that his name is among the noblest in the New England

Surrounded by such comforts as a New England home afforded even in those early times, blessed with lovely children, honored and trusted by all the neighborhood, the Wheelwrights esteemed themselves, and with reason, a happy family.

The little hamlet of Wells, although bordered by the wild forest which was the home of the Abenakis <sup>1</sup>, reposed in seeming security during the long summer months of 1703. These Indians were not always hostile, and if the tocsin of war had sounded in Europe between France and England, their colonies in America were not actually involved in the contest <sup>2</sup>.

On this morning of the 10th of August, the children of the village, at 9 o'clock, were already abroad and full of glee, on their way to school. The apple-orchard was red with tempting fruit. Wild berries were ripe. Late swallows were twittering

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annals. See "*True Stories of New England Captives*," by this elegant writer.

In letters to us, Miss Baker has mentioned an Esther, now living, as the seventh in lineal descent from the grand niece, to whom was sent the oil-painting still preserved in memory of the captive, Mother Esther Wheelwright of the Infant Jesus.

1—"The tract of country which now forms the State of Maine was a disputed ground between the French and English, and the Abenakis, attached to the former by a common faith and former acts of kindness, were embittered against the latter by wrongs and oppressions sustained at their hands. When war broke out, the missionaries, often in jeopardy, remained manfully at their posts, inculcating mercy in war, as well as every other Christian virtue." *Catholic Missions*, by John Gilmary Shea.

2—New England, which had just passed an act condemning Catholic missionaries to imprisonment for life, sought their mediation in the war of 1703, to obtain neutrality on the part of the Abenakis. Failing in this, a party attacked Norridgewalk, burnt the church and village, and offered a reward for the head of the missionary, but the Indians refused to betray him. *Catholic Missions*, Gilmary Shea.

as they flew, while gay sparrows and social robins flitted with their young broods from grassy lane to shady thicket, filling the morning air with melody. Perhaps the village school-house was already full, and the master's voice lifted in solemn prayer when the wild whoop of the Indians was heard.

Oh! the dismay of such an hour. Bounding upon their prey, at the concerted signal, soon had these savage warriors accomplished the feat they had planned.

A few tomahawks had been raised, a few scalps secured, and, as soon, the signal for retreat had been obeyed, the vultures bearing off in their cruel talons the youngest lambkins, the unguarded and feeble of the flock.

The villagers, recovering from the sudden onset, found their number diminished; some lay wounded or dead, others gone; in all, thirty-nine were missing.

In many a cottage there was weeping and loud lamentation, for beloved ones, when called by the tenderest names, answered not, nor could they be discovered after the most diligent search. Many a wistful glance was directed towards the forest, but rash would have been the attempt to pursue the foe within his native fastnesses.

And thus it was that the little darling of the Wheelwright family, a hapless child of seven, was borne away to the depths of the forest, tightly bound in the grasp of her Indian captor, who covering our little Esther's face with his brawny hand, hurried her away with rapid strides to the thickest of the wide, old forest, and hailing with a prolonged, "ho! ho!" his savage brethren, set down his trembling prize, by the side of his own half-clad children and their tawny mother. Then commenced the wanderings of this innocent lamb, suddenly purloined from the fold, and forced to dwell in a den of wolves. Yet, for her, they relaxed their barbarity, as far as

was possible for the circumstances of savage life. The dark-eyed squaw spoke in gentle tones, and guarded with marked preference the pretty little "pale face."

But, alas! what altered scenes, what dismal company, for that little girl brought up with tenderest care, by her own gentle-born, loving English mother! How long were the marches, and how tangled the paths, when the camp broke up, and the whole party set out for the chase! How rude the fare, and how repulsive the resting-place at night; while the days lengthen into weeks! And still our little Esther solaces her childish heart with its thoughts of revenge. "I will tell my papa, indeed I will." But no papa is there more for her; and the months roll on. Her tattered school-dress still clings to her, but it is getting short; her blond tresses forget to fall in clustering ringlets, smoothed only by the oily fingers of her squaw mother. More than this, her English prattle is almost lost, and her tongue is getting used to the strange dialect of her companions, when, one day, a missionary appears in the midst of the Indian village.

Father Bigot is not a stranger among the Abenakis. He is invited to the best lodge, where the children are assembled to hear him tell of the Great Spirit. What does he there behold? A little white girl among the rest, a child of some eight or nine years, whose graceful manners still betray the gentle teachings of her infancy. To rescue the little captive was the first thought of good Father Bigot, with the determination to restore her to civilized life, and to her parents, if they could be discovered. But it is well known with what difficulty an Indian would relinquish one of these adopted children. It was not possible to move, by threats or promises, the proud Abenaki who had placed the pale floweret in his cabin. What then could the missionary do? Oh, he could yet do much for her. He could watch over her; he could

teach her, as he taught the little Indian girls, to adore and love God there in the forest, while he waited some favorable conjuncture to set her at liberty.

No wonder that the child, intelligent beyond her age, and speaking the Indian dialect at the end of three years as well as if it had always been hers, was ever the most attentive listener to the good Father's instructions. No wonder the woods grew pleasant to her now that the love of God filled her young heart.

But when those bereaved parents, who had mourned their child as dead, learned that she was still living, and living in the depths of the forest with the Abenakis, the enemies of their nation, what must have been their sentiments? The only hope of recovering their child depended upon the possibility of obtaining the influence of the French Governor. Trusting in his humanity, they present him their petition; and little Esther, through the mediation of Father Bigot, becomes the subject of serious negotiations between the Marquis de Vaudreuil and the chief of the Abenakis. Even under such patronage, it was no easy matter to obtain the release of the charming and well-beloved prisoner.

Rich presents at last, overcame their reluctance, and in the autumn of 1708, the Indian sachem delivered up the little English girl to the great *Captain of the French*.

Exchanging the bark-roof of the wigwam for the vice-royal residence of the governor at Quebec, the youthful Esther, now twelve years of age, speedily won the love and admiration of her new friends. The Marquis felt for his *protégée* the tenderness of a father, and while awaiting an opportunity to restore her to her parents, provided for her welfare as if she were, indeed, his own child, by placing her with his daughter, in the Ursuline Couvent. Her home lay at the distance of seven hundred miles; the intervening wastes where wan-

dered different tribes of savages, with the French, tended not to diminish that distance, nor the difficulties of communication.

The young girl, happy in her convent-home, had made her first communion, with angelic fervor: and having acquired the graces and accomplishments which became her so well, she was recalled to the home of her protector, the Chateau St. Louis. Very soon, however, the Marquis was informed that Miss Wheelwright's only desire was to prolong her stay in the monastery, and even to share the life of her pious convent-Mothers; but he refused his consent, and sought, with more activity than ever, to discover some means of sending the lovely young girl to her parents, whose grief he compassionated so sincerely. He conducted her to Three Rivers, placing her while he remained there, with our Ursulines, and afterwards to Montreal, where she was protected by the good Mothers of the Hôtel-Dieu.

Unsuccessful in his laudable attempts, on account of the continuance of hostilities between the colonies<sup>1</sup>, the Governor, at last, consented to her return to the Convent. Our Mothers, struck with the peculiar circumstances of the case, the long years during which, the two countries being in a state of warfare, it had been impossible to restore her to her parents; the changes that might have taken place in her family, and, above all, the will of Divine Providence manifesting itself by the course of events, admitted the interesting captive to the novitiate, in October, 1712. During the following year, news of the treaty of peace between France and England restored the colonies to com-

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<sup>1</sup>—In 1711, a fleet under Admiral Walker attempted to take Quebec.

parative security, and the Ursulines were in daily expectation of hearing from their beloved novice's family. She had taken the white veil, with the name of Sister Esther of the Infant Jesus. Her two years of probation had not expired, when, at last, messengers reached Quebec, bearing letters from Mr. and Mrs. Wheelwright. Her heart was not insensible to the prospect of beholding once more a beloved father and mother ; but the voice of grace was louder than that of nature, and she found strength to resist the invitation to return to her family, as she had declined to remain with her friends at the Château. Far from renouncing her cherished vocation, she entreated the Bishop to hasten the day of her final engagement, by admitting her to the vows of religion.

She addressed the same petition to the Governor, whom she considered as her adopted father, and to the community, the mothers and sisters of her choice, who were now dearer to her than family or home. After mature deliberation, taking into consideration that the young girl, according to the French laws was now of age, and that, on the other hand, she had no longer the use of the language of her native country, nor would she find there, the means to practise the religion she had embraced, ascertaining also that the Bishop, as well as the Governor, had given their assent, the nuns admit her to pronounce her vows, thus settling the question, according to her desires, beyond repeal.

In the eloquent address of Father Bigot to the youthful novice, at her profession, let us quote the following argument. " As long, said the preacher, as she had been a minor, she had had no opportunity of returning to her country ; but now that she is of age, her parents cannot object to her choice of a vocation, or if they should disapprove, it will be because they are not aware of its excellence and its sanctity." He then exhorts the happy novice to lasting gratitude for the favors



of Divine Providence in her regard, and tells her she may well exclaim in the words of the prophet-king: "The God who has wrought these wonders in my behalf is the Lord of the eternal ages. Ever shall he be my God! under his delightful law I shall live secure!"

Mother Esther Wheelwright of the Infant Jesus is one of those nuns of olden times, whose names are never pronounced but with love and veneration in the community which she edified and served during sixty-six years. She is not however, the only one of the Indian captives who found the liberty of the soul and the light of faith, in compensation for earthly misfortunes.

With her we naturally associate Miss Davis and Miss Jeryan<sup>1</sup>, rescued like her from captivity among the Abenakis, to end their days in the sweet captivity of Jesus Christ in the monastery.

Miss Mary Ann Davis, in religion Mother Mary Benedict, was already a professed nun since some years, when our little Esther entered the convent as a boarder.

Born in the village of Salem, Massachusetts, she had been taken captive (1686) at the age of six years, by a war party, after seeing her parents massacred and her house in flames. To recount her subsequent fate, her adoption by the sachem of the tribe, who cherished the little orphan more tenderly than his own children; her life in the woods, where she learned to plant the maize, or gather baskets of fragrant berries, but knew not the taste of bread, nor the use of a needle, would be to repeat, in part, what has been related of our interesting Esther. Let us merely tell how another

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1—Or *Jordan*, according to Miss C. A. Baker.

apostle of the Abenakis, Father Rasle, found little Mary Ann docile to his instructions, and faithful in following his counsels, till after many difficulties and delays, he succeeded in extricating the young girl, at the age of seventeen or eighteen, from the perils and hazards of savage life. Then, after finding friends for her among the French, he placed her as a boarder in the convent. This was the "House of Jesus," of which she had heard so much, and which she already regarded as her future home. Passing from the classes to the novitiate, in 1698, she was admitted to profession two years later, and was thus the first Ursuline of English descent in the monastery of Quebec.

Fifty years spent in the service of Him who had spoken to her heart there in the depths of the primeval forests, were not too long to testify, day by day, her gratitude, and to prove it by her fidelity to the rule she had embraced. Humble, meek, laborious, submissive and pious, her life in the convent was like the fragrant May-flower of the woods of Maine, delighting all by its gentle perfume, while it hides itself in the most shady recesses of the valley where it has chosen its retreat.

The third captive who became an Ursuline nun, was Miss Mary Dorothea Jeryan. Borne off to the woods at so tender an age that she had no recollection of any other house but the wigwam where she was living, she had marked the lapse of years only by the budding flowers, or the falling snow, until the same missionary who had baptized Miss Davis, met this other little wanderer, and taught her to know the true God. Regenerated in the saving waters of baptism, and instructed in the sublime truths of religion, Mary Dorothea felt her youthful heart beat with the desire essential to an Ursuline, that of teaching other souls the way of salvation,

while the heavenly Bridegroom inwardly inviting her, bade her hope for the day when she would become his consecrated spouse.

Another missionary succeeding the martyred Father Rasle, cultivated with care this lily of the woods. Transplanted at length to another soil, after some fifteen years had gone by, and placed within the pale of civilization, it was yet a toil to engraft upon those rudimental dispositions the forms of education and refinement.

Her liberator, Father Joseph Aubery, constituted himself her teacher, until having acquired a sufficient knowledge of the French to be able to make herself understood, she was placed in our classes. The progress of the new pupil was not rapid; but our Mothers, having regard to the good will of the subject, her precious dispositions, her piety and zeal, admitted her to the novitiate; and, after the usual delay required by our rules, to profession (1722).

The future career of Mary Dorothea, now known as Mother St. Joseph, fully justified the hopes that had been entertained of her usefulness. The monastery became her second home and country, a thousand-fold dearer to her than her birth-place or native land. During the siege of Quebec by the English in 1759, when the nuns were forced to abandon their sacred asylum, seeking safety beyond the walls of the besieged city, nothing could equal the grief of Mother St. Joseph.

Would the victors, her countrymen, now become the persecutors of her community? Was the country of her adoption destined to lose the priceless gift of faith through the instrumentality of her own race? These afflicting thoughts, joined to an enfeebled state of health, rendered her exile from her beloved cloister one long agony. Her heart had received its death-wound, and when, on the 13th September, she became

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The Church,  
built  
1717-1723.



The  
"old ash-tree,"  
laid prostrate  
by a storm,  
1868.

URSULINE CONVENT,  
Restored, 1687, after the second burning. Enlarged, 1712-1717.  
View from the garden, 1839.

aware of her approaching dissolution, she hailed the approach of her last hour as a prisoner would welcome the joyful news of a speedy release. The reception of the last consolations which the Church offers her children, soothed her dying moments, as she passed away to a better country, on that memorable 14th September, (1759) which marked the downfall of the French government in Canada.

The temporary sojourn of the Ursulines with the beloved nuns of the General Hospital, during the siege, was marked in many ways for long remembrance. We shall only mention here with gratitude the cordial hospitality exercised towards our whole community by those true friends, during that memorable period, reserving other details for their proper date.

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## CHAPTER IX

1712 - 1723

### THE MONASTERY ENLARGED

Within the space of eleven years, from 1712 to 1723, the monastery attained proportions which were found sufficient for the wants of its inhabitants till more than a century later.

It was a period when the colony was entering upon a new phase of its existence. Public calamities were to be followed by a season of comparative repose and prosperity ; there was to be a respite from hourly dread of the Iroquois ; the future conquerors of Canada also were, unknowingly, willing to wait their day. During the judicious administration of Governor de Vaudreuil, up to 1725, the resources of the country

were considerably developed ; many internal improvements were effected while the population increased to 25,000 souls.

The Ursulines seem to have noted the "signs of the times," and made preparations for the coming "better days." As early as 1712, we find them deliberating in chapter, and unanimously deciding upon enlarging the monastery and building a church, notwithstanding the depressed state of their finances. According to the original plan, the buildings to be constructed would have completed a quadrangle, with a front of more than two hundred feet facing Donnacona street, and forming a large interior court-yard.

It was Mother LeMaire of the Angels, the last survivor of the nuns from France, who at the age of seventy-one, undertook this arduous enterprise, pressing its execution with vigor, and obtaining, several times, generous subsidies from her wealthy relatives in Paris. The process of construction was necessarily tedious and expensive ; but far greater were the difficulties, when it was ascertained that the plan was really too vast for the immediate wants, as well as the actual resources of the community. The foundations already commenced had to be abandoned, and begun anew in another direction, at the price of much loss and delay.

The only part Mother Mary of the Angels saw completed, was the novitiate, an addition seventy-five feet in length to the wing styled, *La Sainte Famille*, which had been the nuns' department since 1687.

The foundations of the church and the parlor building were also commenced by her ; but the aged Mother was then taken from her labors to her eternal rest, and the task of continuing them devolved on another Superior, Mother Angelique of St. John. The building along the street, destined for the conventual entrance and the parlors, was completed in 1717. Then only could the nuns continue

the construction of their "second temple," and that they did with such ardor, that they labored at it with their own hands.

The annals relate the building of the church as follows : " On recommencing the labors, we dressed a little Indian boy, to represent the Infant Jesus, and prepared him to lay the corner-stone in honor of St. Joseph. Then each one devoted herself, according as she was capable, to contribute to the erection of that sacred edifice which had so long been in contemplation. At the hours when the masons were absent for their meals, we used to mount the scaffolding, carrying up the stone and the mortar, our Mother Superior leading the way, and the community following her example with alacrity and emulation. With the blessing of God, every thing succeeded marvellously.

" When the masons were served, all returned to their respective labors, some to painting, gilding or embroidery ; some wrought tapestry, or bark-work, others made artificial flowers. Their earnings served to augment our revenues and to aid in paying the workmen. During all this time, adds the annalist, we omitted none of our spiritual exercises, we infringed upon none of our holy rules and observances. We have also to be thankful that not one of the workmen met with any accident while working on our buildings. A kind Providence has blessed us in a special manner, enabling us to meet all these expenses, notwithstanding the loss of half our income by the reduction of the funds on the Hôtel de Ville, in Paris."

The construction of the church was finished. An altar had been raised, and, although no pillars yet lifted their crowning capitals around it, no sculptured decorations adorned the sanctuary, no paintings hung along the naked walls, yet the sacred edifice, although bare of all ornament, was a desirable exchange from that small apartment which had served as a chapel for the last thirty years. Great,



therefore, were the rejoicings among the inmates of the cloister.

The friendly citizens of Quebec shared the joy of the nuns, as they proved by coming in large numbers to celebrate with them three consecutive festivals: the ceremony of the consecration, the feast of the Assumption, and that of the holy relics. At all these pious festivities Bishop Saint-Valier presided, with his clergy, in the midst of all that was then most distinguished in the city.

Although blessed, the chapel still required the presence of workmen, and did not serve regularly for mass and the other observances, until the 19th March following (1723).

It belonged to St. Joseph, the titular patron of the church and of the monastery, to transfer the Blessed Sacrament to the new altar as to another Nazareth, after a longer exile than was that of the Holy Family in Egypt.

It was only thirteen years later (1735)<sup>1</sup> that the architectural decorations, designed, it is said, after a plan of the private chapel of Louis XIV, gave the last finish to the interior, rendering the church of the Ursulines one of the neatest, considering its dimensions, of the four principal churches in the city. The gilding, of which there is that profusion required by the taste of those times, was all executed by the patient toil of the nuns themselves.

The paintings with which it is adorned at the present day, were acquired only at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

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1—The college of the Jesuits commenced in 1635, was completed about the same time (1730).

## CHAPTER X

## QUEBEC IN 1720

## THE NOVITIATE OF THE URSULINES AT THE SAME DATE

An accurate historian, writing in 1720, has left us a picture of life and manners in Quebec, at once graphic and curious in its details, which will help to set off another picture, less known, that of life and society in the cloister.

Recording his personal observations, Charlevoix says: "There are not more than 7,000 souls in Quebec; but one finds there a little world where all is select, and calculated to form an agreeable society. A Governor General with his staff, nobles, officers, and troops; an Intendant, with a Superior Council, and inferior courts; a Commissary of Marine, a Grand Provost, a Grand Voyer (trustee of roads); a Superintendent of Streams and Forests, whose jurisdiction is certainly the most extensive in the world; merchants in easy circumstances, or, at least, living as if they were; a Bishop and a numerous clergy: Recollets and Jesuits; three well established communities of nuns; other circles elsewhere, as brilliant as those surrounding the Governor and Intendant. In short, it seems to me, that for all classes of persons, there are abundant means of passing the time agreeably. Every one contributes thereto to his utmost. There are games and excursions, the parties using in summer *des calèches* or canoes; in winter they have sledges and snow-shoes to bear them over the snow and ice. Hunting is a favorite amusement: many gentlefolks have no other resource for living comfortably.

"Current news is confined to a few topics, as the country

does not afford many. The news from Europe comes all at once, but lasts all the year, furnishing endless comments upon the past and conjecture about the future. The arts and sciences have their turn, so that conversation never languishes.

"The Canadians breathe, from their earliest years, an air of liberty which renders them very agreeable in social intercourse. Nowhere else is our language spoken with greater purity and free from any defective accent.

"There are no rich people here; if there were they would do honor to their fortune, as very few persons trouble themselves about laying up riches. They live well, if they can also afford to dress well; if not, they spare at table in order to wear richer apparel. And it must be allowed that dress becomes our Canadians. They are a fine-looking people, and the best blood of France runs in their veins. Good humour, refined and genteel manners, are common to all, and rusticity either in language or habits is unknown, even in the distant country-places."

Thus far our historian. Let us now inquire at the Ursulines, how that "little world" described as so delightful is represented with them. Entering the novitiate, new and well lighted, commanding a pleasant prospect from its windows that overlook the garden and a wide extending landscape, we find assembled under the eye of a grave but gentle novice-mistress, twenty young ladies, of whom four wear the badge of probation, the white veil. These must have but lately renounced the good cheer, the pleasures and amusements, which even the dispassionate Jesuit seems to have found so engaging.

A glance upon the old register shall be our guide, for in the cloister rank and title count as nothing: the only prece-

dence acknowledged among sister-novices, is founded on the relative date of their entry. The family name, however proud or honorable, is laid aside, and the spouse of Christ is henceforth known by some appellation that serves to remind her of heaven more than of earth.

First, then, in seniority of profession, we meet Sister Esther Wheelwright of the Infant Jesus. She has nearly completed her sixth year in the novitiate, and will therefore soon exchange the first place here for the last in the community; and happier will she esteem herself in occupying that last place, than when, in later years, she will be called to govern the monastery as Superior. Her history is somewhat known to our readers, as well as that of the last white-veiled novice, Sister Mary Dorothea Jeryan of St. Joseph; we have called them: "The Captives."

Unmindful of the etiquette of the convent, we shall revive, for the moment, discarded titles, to present Miss Charlotte de Muy (Sister St. Helen), daughter of the Chevalier Danneau de Muy, Governor of Louisiana; and her cousin Marie-Anne de Boucherville (Sister St. Ignatius), naming one of her venerable ancestors, Pierre Boucher de Boucherville, first Governor of Three Rivers.

Not six months after the entry of Miss de Muy, the monastery-door opened to the eager appeal of Miss Catherine de Ramesay, now known as Sister St. Radegonde, daughter of the Chevalier Claude de Ramesay, Seigneur of Sorel and Ste. Marie-le-Monnoir, Governor of Montreal. The absence of Miss de Ramesay and Miss de Muy from the circles of fashion in Montreal, doubtless produced a sensation at the time. In the parental mansion, especially, there was a void left which it was difficult to fill. But they, if not indifferent to the charms of a flattering world and their own high position, found strength to despise them, and they considered it

as gain to exchange the highest worldly distinctions their country could afford, for the humblest rank in the House of the Lord.

For the benefit of such as cannot believe in a disinterested sacrifice, let us open the annals at once, to see to what rank Miss de Ramesay aspired in religion, on quitting the highest in society. "From the day of her entrance into the novitiate, she gave proof of the excellence of her vocation by laboring seriously to advance in perfection. She pronounced her vows in the most edifying dispositions, to her great satisfaction as well as ours. From this moment she advanced daily in the practice of every virtue, detached from every thing created, zealous for the instruction of youth, and for all that regarded the service of God, careful to avoid the parlor, and every thing that could remind her of the world she had abandoned."

As to Mother Marie-Anne de Boucherville of St. Ignatius, one line will suffice to characterize her. On our usual authority, the annals, we can assert that she had retained one predominant passion: it was "to employ every moment of her time for the benefit of the community, or in aiding and rendering service to her Sisters. She rejoiced to be second in the offices, seeking in the obedience she rendered her companion, more frequent opportunities to practise her favorite virtue, humility."

Not less edifying in piety and abnegation, was the religious career of Mother de Muy of St. Helen, whose health gave small promise of a long life. Delicate and fragile as was the casket, the pearl it enclosed was of great price. A gifted and energetic mind, "enabled her to render great services in the classes, notwithstanding the long sufferings which she endured with astonishing courage." To her pen, as annalist, the Convent owes long and interesting details of the Seven Years'

War, which closed the French domination in Canada, her own death on that memorable 14th September, silently imparting new pathos to the sad picture she draws of the distress and defeat of her countrymen.

But returning now to the 31st August, 1717, the day when Miss Ramesay, in the midst of the élite of the society both of Quebec and Montreal, receives the white veil from the hands of Bishop Saint-Valier, and Father Gerard, S. J., makes a "ravishing discourse" on the happiness to be found in the service of God, we may discover among his hearers the sudden awakening of another religious vocation.

The sermon wrought the conversion of a "young worldling," whom we now introduce as Sister St. Borgia, lately Miss Catherine Margaret des Meloises. That white veil and linen band conceal a brow which was then adorned with all that is most admired in wreathing tress, or sparkling gem, or opening rose-bud. That sable robe of serge replaces the rich brocade or floating gossamer, that often enveloped her graceful form, radiant with the fickle joys of the ball-room, at the Castle, the palace of the Intendant, or the "brilliant circles elsewhere."

The transformation is due to divine grace, which, after pursuing her with gentle importunity from her early years, had asserted its claims victoriously on the occasion just alluded to. Issuing from the chapel, where the voice of an internal monitor had seconded the eloquence of the sacred preacher, unable to control her emotion, she flies from the presence of the gay company that had attended her; she hastens along the yet deserted streets. "Passing near the Jesuits' church, she enters. There, alone with her reflections in the presence of God, listening to the reproaches of her

conscience and to the voice of grace, she begins to detest a life of vanity ; she begs pardon for her long resistance and delay ; she implores the divine mercy for strength and courage to break the ties that bind her to the world, humbly confessing her own weakness and inability without the powerful aid of Heaven : she addresses herself to the Blessed Virgin and to the saints, particularly to St. Francis Borgia, to whom she had a special devotion.

" Her prayer had been already accepted ; she arose comforted, strengthened in her resolution to give herself entirely to God. During the two years she was still obliged to delay entering the monastery, never more was she to be met with at soirée or ball, or pleasure-party. And when, at last, having arranged with her brother and sisters all that regarded her inheritance, she humbly demanded and obtained admittance among the daughters of St. Ursula, the novitiate appeared to her the gate of paradise. She longed for the day, when she would put off her worldly attire, as a mark of her voluntary divorce with the world.

" From that moment she seemed indeed to become a new creature in Jesus Christ. Her piety was most exemplary, her charity unbounded. Her detachment from self and from every thing earthly ; her mortification, her fidelity to the observance of the rule and her holy engagements, rendered her a bright example of what is meant by religious perfection. It was necessary, on more than one occasion, to moderate her fervor, which always exceeded her strength. Her services, which were extended to all, even to the lay-sisters in their laborious avocations, were especially precious in the classes, where her zeal for the salvation of souls, and her own experience of the vanity of the world, made her eloquent in exhorting her young charge to avoid its snares, and to assure their salvation by the practice of virtue.

"Although she loved her family tenderly, she was extremely guarded in speaking of her relatives, and if, in conversation, there was any allusion to the nobility of her birth, she evidently suffered and would adroitly introduce some other topic of discourse.

"What suited her humility better was to be reminded of her defects; and seeking to expiate the self-love which once led her to relish compliments, she would willingly tax herself with hypocrisy when her piety, for want of some other fault more apparent, would be discreetly blamed as excessive.

"In short, our fervent Mother St. Borgia pressed with such ardor the work of her perfection that she won her crown early, passing from the novitiate, her earthly paradise, to that above, just as she was completing the fourth year of her religious profession."

We have been insensibly led to dwell too long, perhaps, upon the interesting Miss des Meloises. The "little world" of Quebec has yet other representatives of its highest circles in this novitiate of 1720. Here are the two daughters of Mr. Charles Gaillard, member of the Supreme Council, Sister Marie-Louise of the Virgin and Sister Marie-Clare of St. Thomas, two fervent young girls, who chose the narrow path, in preference to the broad and flowery one, before they had attained their sixteenth year.

Here we also find daughters of merchants and professional men, of the type named by our historian, "in easy circumstances." One of these, Miss Angelique Perthuis, (Sister of the Angels) wears the white veil; among the professed, are Sister St. Francis Xavier, (Miss Louise Pinguet-Vaucours), Sister Teresa of Jesus, (Miss Françoise Baudouin), Sister St. Elizabeth, (Miss Angelique Langlois), Sister St. Stanislaus, (Miss Angelique Normandin). These four young girls



discovered in early youth that the world, all fascinating as it may appear, is insufficient to satisfy the cravings of the soul for happiness; and they sought it in the service of Him who has declared that "His yoke is easy and His burden light." The testimony of those who lived with them till the close of their peaceful lives, is that they found within the cloister "the hundred-fold" that is promised by One who cannot deceive

Let us now introduce a few more young ladies from Montreal. In the course of the same year that saw Miss de Rame-say quit the gay world for the cloister, her example was followed by three of her companions. One of these is Miss Marie-Renée du Mesnil, (Sister St. Gertrude), whose father accumulates the titles of Major in the army, Lieutenant of the Navy, Knight of the Order of St. Louis, &c. "This amiable Mother, writes the annalist thirty-four years later, adorned with all the qualities that would have enabled her to occupy with advantage the high position Providence had assigned her in society, esteemed above all things a life hidden in God. Penetrated with sentiments of humility, and submissive to the will of Heaven, she rejoiced in those infirmities which rendered her incapable of occupying any office of importance, or of discharging those duties of the institute, at once so delightful to an Ursuline, while they are so meritorious, and honorable."

Another of Montreal's high-born ladies, among our novices, is Sister St. Anthony, daughter of M. Charles Juchereau Duchesnay. Like the other young ladies we have named from Montreal, Miss Teresa Juchereau formed her first acquaintance with the Ursulines as a boarder. Returning to the bosom of her family, where she was cherished most tenderly, at the same time that she was surrounded by all that is best

calculated to dazzle the youthful imagination and soften the heart, she had not always paused to distinguish between what she owed to her position in society, and what she was giving to her own love of the world and to vanity. That dangerous passion was taking deep root in her heart, while the daily round of dissipation and pleasure was as surely extinguishing all true piety. Our annalist notes the vocation of Miss Juchereau as "a conquest of grace, the fruit of a fervent retreat. This privileged soul, she says, won heaven early, her exile being abridged by the Divine Master in order to hasten her reward."

As to Miss de Repentigny (Sister St. Agatha), although Miss Juchereau's friend, we shall reserve the particulars of her vocation for another moment. We therefore introduce next, Miss Elizabeth Josephite de Villedonné, whose father was Etienne de Villedonné, Captain of a detachment of the Navy. Unlike the two last-named young ladies, Miss de Villedonné, during the two or three years of her absence from the convent, always shared reluctantly the gay amusements that offered her their attractions.

Three other novices remain to be introduced: they are not from the cities of Quebec or Montreal, but from country-mansion or farm-house, not less attractive.

From the Island of Orleans there is Sister St. Margaret, (Miss Le Clerc); from Chateau Richer, Sister St. Monica (Miss Marguerite Cloutier); from the parish of St. Joachim, Sister St. Agnes, (Miss Marie-Anne Buteau), who is destined to outlive all her companions of the novitiate, prolonging her active and useful existence to the age of eighty-three years.

The ceremony of this introduction has been long, yet would we name our three good lay-sisters, whose services are not less precious in the eyes of God, nor less appreciated

by the community, than those of the choir-sisters who labor in the Institute.

They are Sisters St. Thecla (Blanche Marier), Mary of the Resurrection (Marie-Anne Racine), and St. Andrew (Marie-Julienne Maufis). The two last-named live cheerfully their fifty years, in the humble occupations to which are attached equal rewards, and far greater facilities for acquiring them, than in the more arduous, or more responsible offices in the community.

As we retire from that novitiate, where we have seen so many young ladies generously triumphing over the sentiments of nature, and trampling upon all that is most esteemed and sought after in the world, are there not some among our readers who are struck with apprehension and pity, as if they had just beheld so many victims, doomed to feel the intolerable weight of perpetual solitude, and to drag out their weary existence in the bonds of an unvarying submission to obedience and a severe rule? Are there not some who forget what the Apostle says of himself, "that the world is crucified to him, as he is to the world, and yet that he superabounds in joy?"

But the firm decision of each at the trying moment of separation from home, and her perseverance in her cherished vocation, are the best reply to any misgiving of the kind. Truly the cloistered nun may say: "I have separated myself from all that the world holds dear and delightful, but I have done so willingly, and I consider such a loss my greatest gain. It is my pleasure, my honor, henceforth to seek to live for God alone, serving my fellow-creatures for the love of God. I trust myself to one who does not change; in Him I shall find a remedy for my own inconstancy. Here, as the author of the *Imitation of Christ* promises, I am excited

to good by example, and warned from evil by admonition. Here are diverse offices, and one spirit of charity. Here, when one is weary of attendance to duty, another supplies her place; while one reads, many are edified, and each having her weekly course, all are mutually relieved. When one happily sleeps in the Lord, she has many intercessors to deliver her the sooner from the place of expiation. Her labor and good conversation will not be forgotten, but will profit many in future times for an example."

"Here, as St. Clement and St. Basil tell, one is able to pray for me to God, another to console me when sick, another to teach me what is useful to salvation. Another will correct me with kindness, or consult together with me like a friend; and all will love me truly, without guile, without flattery. O sweet attendance of friends! O blessed ministry of comforters! O the faithful services of those who fear only God! O the true simplicity which is incapable of a falsehood! O the honorable labor which is in obedience to God, to please God!

"O monastic life, holy, angelical, blessed! No tongue can express the sentiments of love which I feel for thee, no voice can depict the joy with which thou dost fill my heart!"

No wonder, then, that the happy soul, chosen by Heaven for so sublime a vocation, makes her whole life-time one hymn of thanksgiving.

By fidelity to her rule, to prayer, and the sacraments, she obtains strength to sustain with joy the gentle yoke of Christ; laboring at stated hours in the school-room or in the service of her sisters, having no other end in view but to accomplish her duty for the love of God. But let us also inquire, what provision has been made for relaxation and repose.

The order of the day, as mapped out in olden times, and

still adhered to as much as possible, is something remarkable. Each hour has, it is true, its allotted occupation, from the time when the bell at four o'clock announces the hour to rise, till the signal for retiring before nine in the evening; yet with such amplitude of space, such "roominess" as Faber calls it, that one duty presses not on the steps of another, in such a manner as to give the feeling of being enchained or enslaved. There are intervals, of more or less duration, which serve as a halt or resting-spot for the feeble, at the same time that it is a spur to the vigorous, by affording occasion for some spontaneous act of piety, kindness or zeal.

The hour of recreation is esteemed of the same value for heaven as the hour of prayer; it is enjoyed with zest, in proportion to the silence that precedes. The gaiety of conversation is pure and sincere. It is the family circle, without its anxieties and cares; it is society, without its tedious forms and shallow compliments.

There are *excursions* too, in summer, when the day is fine; for the convent grounds are spacious, and not devoid of shade. The birds seem to sing more sweetly there than anywhere else, and build their nests, in security, in every clump of lilac, plum, or cherry-tree. The buzz and hum of bees and every gay-winged insect that loves to nestle in the cups of flowers, make music, that is not lost by the over boisterous merriment of the groups that stroll leisurely through the winding alleys of the old garden.

Here, a favorite bed of pansies, there, a mingled glow of roses, pinks, and lilies, the gaudy tulip or the gladiolus, attract and delight the eye; or it is the growth of some shrub or tree that is watched with interest. The wonders of vegetable life, the special beauty of each leaf, afford pleasure to the contemplative mind, shadowing forth the beauties and

wonders of that unseen world to which she constantly aspires.

Or, let it be a later hour, when the offices and duties of the day being over, the evening is closing around the monastery in that mysterious silence which is its greatest charm. Then it is that the sacred words of the divine Office are heard, from many voices that form but one chant, in which the Angels join, although their heavenly accents may be inaudible to mortal ear.

Thus falls the curtain of night around the peaceful cloister, while each one, according to the attractions of grace, enters into the recesses of her own conscience : there, finding all at rest, all passions hushed, who can tell the deep feeling of security and thanksgiving that sweetly fills the soul, rendering that humble cell an image and an anticipation of Paradise ?

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## CHAPTER XI

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### THE CHAPEL OF THE SAINTS

A little sanctuary, much frequented by the inmates of the cloister, a sort of pilgrimage to which they resort with special confidence and consolation, is known as the "chapel of the Saints." An ancient statue of Our Lady of Great Power occupies the centre of the altar, amid sculptured decorations, the whole breadth of the wall on either side being covered with paintings and reliquaries of various size and form, the larger ones resting on gilded stands, the smaller ones, enclosed under glass, in the four pilasters that support the entablature.

But the wealth of the chapel consists in the quantity of relics with which it has been endowed. The antiquity of the shrines that enclose them, and the names of the donors, add new interest to the objects already so precious in themselves.

Among the first of these pious donors, we may mention Dom Claude Martin, a Benedictine monk. He had already, in 1662, procured for the monastery which his revered Mother had founded, and where she was then living, the relics of the martyrs, Justus, Modestus, Maximinus and Felix.

One of the Ursulines of Metz sent us from Cologne precious relics of St. Ursula and her companions. Another friend, Madame de Guise, Abbess of Montmartre, gave others. In 1671, Mother Le Maire of the Angels, coming to the monastery, brought relics of the martyrs Placidus, Firminus, Januarius, Peregrinus and Honorius, which her brother the Abbé Le Maire, had procured for her in Rome. Some years later, Father C. Boileau, another relative of Mother Mary of the Angels, enriched the monastery with a casket containing the entire body of the holy martyr St. Clement, which he had obtained from Pope Innocent XI. Other relics of the Martyrs, Vitalis, Dionysius, Candidus, Marcellinus, &c., whose names are venerable and illustrious for their sufferings for Jesus' sake, were bestowed by the same generous friend.

In short, so large a quantity of these treasures had been received from various pious donors that, in 1674, it was decided to prepare a chapel where they might be deposited with special honor.

This primitive chapel perished in the conflagration of the church and choir, of which it formed a part, in 1686. But the relics were not suffered to perish. A lay-sister, animated with fervor that gave her new strength and courage,

persisted in transporting them, till she had nearly become herself a martyr to her pious zeal, as we have elsewhere related.

In times more recent, other treasures of a similar nature have been added. Looking over the catalogue, we find the names of St. Augustine, the great legislator of monastic institutions, St. Francis of Sales, "the most amiable saint;" Ignatius of Loyola and others formed to sanctity in his Society, St. Francis Xavier, St. Aloysius and St. Stanislaus, the patrons of youth; St. Angela Merici, foundress of the Ursulines, St. Magdalen de Pazzi, &c. The recent martyrs of China and Japan are also represented there.

Our chapel of the Saints has other objects of still higher antiquity. Like the "Sainte chapelle" in Paris, it has a particle of the true Cross and of the Crown of Thorns; the former enclosed in a small crystal tube, forms the centre of a silver cross about fourteen inches in height. It was presented to the Monastery in 1677, by Dom Claude Martin.

Is it necessary, here, to justify the veneration given to the relics of Saints? to tell why, and how, we honor the friends of God, the champions and defenders of the Faith? And, when they have gone to their reward, how we love to have some memento of them, some object to recall them to mind, with the thought of the heaven where they are rewarded, and where we finally hope one day to dwell with them?

It is a sentiment so natural that we all practise the devotion to relics, when our friends or relatives are concerned. Not many years ago, Washington's grateful countrymen bore in a procession a lock of his hair, as a trophy of which they might be proud, and were not afraid of being called superstitious. Our shrines and reliquaries enclose similar objects, and we venerate them with a kindred feeling, heightened by



the knowledge of favors granted by Heaven, on more than one occasion, to those who thus honor them "whom God delights to honor." It is a feeling similar to that which renders the Catacombs sacred, or makes the soil of the arena within the crumbling Coliseum seem holy ground.

Yes! when the first twilight shades are descending, after that plaintive anthem of the Vesper-Office, *In manus tuas Domine*, etc., "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit," one loves to kneel in that little sanctuary where repose so many memorials of those that have given their soul to God in peace. And when, at earliest dawn, one enters there, remembering those who like the Psalmist could say: *Ad te de luce vigilo*, "to thee, O Lord, have I watched from the earliest light of day," the soul will ever be refreshed, and prepared for the sacred hour of morning prayer. Nor is it less touching to bring to mind, that for the last one hundred and seventy years, every nun who has lived in the solitude of the Old Monastery, has often knelt in prayer before the antique statue of Our Lady of Great Power, in that same quiet chapel.

The ashes of the heroic foundresses, those of the Venerable Mother, who now awaits the highest honors the Church of God awards to her most faithful children, seem to speak in words of gentle encouragement. Oh! how fervently should each one pray that nothing may ever penetrate within the precincts of the monastery to disturb in the least the spirit of peace and sanctity which is here so palpably felt. But there is something here more tangible, even, than the spirit of the place: there are also

#### EX VOTOS

An ex voto! the word tells of pressing danger and of succor obtained in the moment of peril. It tells of some

suffering relieved, for which there was no earthly alleviation to be obtained. And who has not, at some time, suffered such anxiety, or seen such woe threatening, that there went up to God that deep cry of the heart which pierced the heavens, and brought speedy help for the hour of need?

For all who have thus prayed, that little twinkling flame, dimly lighting an ancient sanctuary, has a language; and they turn to view it again, with more of sympathy than curiosity. If they have read a delicious page in the "*Histoire du Monastère*," under the title of "*La Lampe qui ne s'éteint pas*," they ask no further explanation. For those who have not, we shall inscribe here the following lines on

## THE VOTIVE LAMP

O twinkling Lamp! thy feeble ray  
Sheds no refulgent glare;  
And yet thou knowest no decay,  
Since once, thrice fifty years away,  
Thou first wast trimmed with care.

Dire was the conflict, when her chains  
That maiden sought to break:  
Now in her soul triumphant reigns  
God's holy love, and now it wanes,—  
'Tis earthly flames that wake.

"O Mother Powerful, lend thine aid!  
Pity my dire distress!  
I've fled me to this cloister's shade,  
Let now all worldly phantoms fade,  
If Heaven my project bless."

"Will not the pitying Virgin hear  
A suppliant in her need?  
Will she not make my pathway clear,  
Sending me grace to persevere,  
From all this darkness freed?"

Lo ! swift descending from on high,  
Peace to her bosom flows :  
As swift the gloom and sorrow fly,—  
Her soul in sweet security,  
Forgets its recent throes.

For light so pure in darkest hour,  
A Lamp burns near the shrine  
Where Mary, Mother of Great Power,  
Still hears our prayers, and graces shower,  
Where beams so tender shine.

Now, many circling years have sped  
While yet that tiny flame,  
By gratitude is fondly fed,  
As when at first its light was shed  
Around that high-born dame.

Still does it point the way secure  
To Her, our Queen above,  
Whose tender bosom, ever pure,  
Pities the woes we may endure,  
And succors us with love.

Come, then, at twilight's pensive hour;  
Come, in the early dawn !  
Come, when the skies around you lower,  
Come to Our Lady of Great Power,  
Sure Help of the forlorn !

Though titles new, round Mary's name,  
May cluster every year,  
Yet as I view that votive flame,  
Lit by the hand of noble dame,  
I love the more that ancient claim,  
" MOTHER OF POWER " reign here !

Who, then, had lit that tiny lamp before the shrine of Our Lady of Great Power ? that lamp which has flickered and spent daily its little life to see it perpetually renewed during one hundred and seventy years ? That pious maiden's name

was Marie Madeleine de Repentigny. Her vocation affords an instance of the manner in which God sometimes pursues a soul, rebellious at first, forcing her, as it were, to take place at the "marriage feast" to which He had long invited her by the voice of His secret inspirations.

The de Repentigny family were among the first of the nobility that came out to settle in the colony. Mother Mary of the Incarnation makes mention of them with the highest praise, as early as 1645. The daughters were always to be found among our boarders. Marie-Madeleine had her turn from the age of about ten years, till her education was considered to be in accordance with her rank and position in society.

On leaving the convent, she, like many others, had not formed to herself any fixed plan of life, and soon found herself surrounded with those temptations that often beset the pathway of a young girl on her entry into the world.

Gay parties of pleasure, frivolous amusements, idle conversations, filled up the precious hours from day to day, leaving her little time for reflection, serious reading, or prayer. The prestige of rank, wit and beauty on the one side, that of merit, politeness and noble demeanor on the other, soon resulted in the preliminaries of an alliance, which appeared advantageous in the eyes of the world; and which met with the approval of Marie-Madeleine's parents, as well as those of the young officer, her intended, who was a relative of the family. On such occasions, when all seems so bright in the future, who thinks of seriously consulting to know the will of God?

Suddenly the young officer is called away on duty. Alas, for the fallacious promises of earthly happiness! The first report brings tidings of his death!

To the violent grief and mourning of the first months, succeeds an attempt to dissipate this irksome gloom of mind by plunging anew into the whirl of worldly pleasures. But the kind hand of Providence was still extended, waiting the moment to reclaim this prodigal child, and lead her to an abode of peace and security. At one of the churches in the city, an eloquent and zealous Jesuit was giving the exercises of a retreat for young ladies. Marie Madeleine went with the rest, but soon found that the sacred orator was preaching—so it seemed to her—for her alone.

“What will it avail a man to gain the whole world, and yet to lose his own soul, or what shall he give in exchange for his soul?”

These solemn words of our Blessed Lord sank deep into her soul, and she then perceived that there had been a void in her heart, which the vanities of the world had never been able to fill. While plunged in serious thought, the salvation of her soul stands before her, as an all important affair. She takes time for reflection, and beginning to perceive the designs of Providence, she resolves to correspond to them. After due consultation, she solicits admission into the novitiate of the Ursulines. The nuns, remembering her many good qualities, without hesitation, accepted her.

But no sooner had she reached Quebec, than she began to experience the torments of doubt and perplexity. “Was she truly called? Had she strength to embrace the rules of the religious state, the austerities of the cloister?” She overcomes this first temptation generously, conscious that a passing feeling of repugnance is no proof that she is not in the path of duty. On entering the novitiate, the trial disappears, but soon it returns with such violence that the convent seems to her as irksome as it had at first appeared delightful.

But Marie Madeleine, now Sister St. Agatha, had learned the force of prayer. She takes refuge at the feet of Mary. She calls upon her as the Mother of Mercy, the Virgin most Potent, and is heard. The clouds have rolled back from her soul, that now basks in the effulgence of joy !

Confirmed, henceforth, in her vocation ; grateful for the protection of Heaven, she begs permission to found a perpetual memento of the grace, the invisible *light* she has received. Her own life, cheerful, courageous, mortified, during the twenty years she had yet to spend within the monastery, was another light, rejoicing her companions more than the *Votive Lamp* which she daily trimmed with sentiments ever fresh of piety and gratitude.

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## CHAPTER XII

1682 - 1739

### EDUCATION IN THE CONVENT

In picturing the Monastery, at any period, we must surround it with that interesting portion of humanity, joyous, careless, ingenuous youth.

For the sake of these lambkins of the fold of Christ, the cloister of the Ursulines is not as strict as in the contemplative orders. The conventual door opens as readily to the appeal of children to be instructed as if it had not a double lock. The welcome that awaits a pupil is as warm, the greeting as tender, as if the inmates of the convent were the household friends of her infancy.

The name of "Mother", which she is allowed to bestow on those who are receiving her with open arms, tells the measure of love she may expect, the amount of care and solicitude she may claim as her right. For the spouse of Jesus remembers the word of Him, who once, taking in His arms little children, blessed them, saying: "Let little children come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever receiveth one of these little ones in my name, receiveth me." Far from regarding the duties of a teacher as irksome, she rejoices in them. She esteems no employment more sweet and honorable, than that of forming the youthful heart to piety, and storing the tender mind with useful knowledge, convinced that she is thus contributing, most certainly, to the welfare and happiness of society.

The boarding-school, like the community, is a little commonwealth in itself, with its own statutes, privileges, and immunities. The "local government," nominated by the Superior, is composed of a mistress-general, with her staff of teachers and aids, as many as may be required for the intellectual, the spiritual, and the physical wants of the pupils.

It is the mistress-general who welcomes the little stranger as she enters, and dries the tears that will come when parting from fond parents for the first time. It is she who comforts the trembling child with gentle words, and conducts her to the chapel, near by, to ask the blessing of God on her sojourn in the monastery. Then, the same maternal hand, after weighing the little stock of knowledge the new pupil may already possess, guides her to the class to which she will belong, continuing, as the year advances, to note her progress by the report of the different teachers: for the

mistress-general is entrusted with the monthly distribution of certificates, and is responsible to the parents. In short, she is the intermediary of authority, maintaining that of the other mistresses, and applying to the Superior in all cases beyond the limits of her own jurisdiction. Thus, as the Apostle has advised, "all things are settled in order, that all being of one mind and living in union, the God of peace and love may be with His servants."

Our little pupil is soon at home in the convent, and passing from the class-rooms, where the toil of learning is sweetened by the kindness of the teacher, to the refectory where she is plentifully served; to the recreation-hall, or the playgrounds, where innocent sports make the hour pass only too swiftly, she forgets the sadness of the parting scene at the conventual door.

Then, as the months roll on, the good seed, destined to produce ten or a hundredfold, is gradually sown: the love of God, the fear of offending Him, respect for authority, fidelity to order and duty, habits of virtue and self-government: such is the basis which the conscientious teacher seeks to lay, broad and deep, when laboring to form the character of her youthful charge.

In the early part of the eighteenth century, the course of studies in our schools, was much the same as that followed in the mother-house in Paris, the Ursulines of Quebec having adopted, with the constitutions of that Congregation, their rules for the educational department. The *curriculum* embraced reading and grammar; arithmetic and penmanship; religious instruction, including sacred history, with occasional recitations in prose and verse, to impart a taste for reading, as well as to ornament the memory and improve the mind.



Dramatic dialogues on moral and pious subjects, pastorals, or complimentary apologues on anniversary occasions, were held in esteem, as a means of forming the pupils to gracefulness of manners, and that degree of modest assurance which is so becoming, yet so difficult to attain in youth. Embroidery, in its various styles, and needle-work in general, received great attention, as well as domestic economy.

Such a course, announced in the prospectus of an educational institution at the present day, would excite surprise and be declared positively too elementary. Yet we may be allowed to doubt, whether any system of modern education can be found that does greater justice to its recipient, than the old training did, the chief object of which seems to have been to prepare the young for the great aim of life: that of living according to the precepts of religion, and performing well the duties of one's station in society.

When we can name such women as Madame de Maintenon, and many other distinguished ladies of her time; when we see a Marchioness de Vaudreuil, a pupil of our convent, called (1709) without any further preparation, to fill the office of sub-governess to princes of the royal line of Bourbon; when we have read the lives and the writings of many of our ancient nuns, we cannot but admit that there are reasons for not depreciating the old system of education in convents.

Zeal for the education of their children is one of the honorable traits of the early settlers of Canada, many of whom would never have crossed the ocean to New France, so they assured Father Lejeune, if they had not been certain of finding there, persons able to guide their consciences in the care of their salvation, as well as to instruct their offspring

in virtue and learning. In this respect, as Le Clerc says, "Canada was more fortunate than new settlements in other parts of the world."

It is not, therefore, surprising, that our lists show the prominent names of the country from one generation to another. Those of lesser note come also intermingled, while the day-school or *externat* provided for the religious instruction and primary education of all classes, rich and poor, in the city.

Terms for board were always moderate, and our good Mothers, accommodating. Money being rare in the colony, payments were made in goods and provisions, sometimes in wood for fuel, or in materials for building; and not unfrequently from the alms-box of the monastery, or from the sums occasionally donated by the French government.

The best families were often not less in need of concessions and "favors" than the poorer class; for, if the latter having to labor for their subsistence, were dependant on "wind and weather," a fine season or a good harvest, the former had to reckon with the casualties of the ocean, the accidents of war, and the certainties of an inadequate salary.

As to the number of pupils frequenting the day-school, or residing in the convent as boarders, our Mothers seem to have left to the good angels who assembled them, the care of counting and comparing one year with another. Lists are often incomplete; moreover, that season of renovation and reckoning, the vacation, being unknown, there were pupils entering or leaving throughout the year, without any obligation or motive for presenting a total, for any given period.

If the annals state that there were, in such a year, "sixteen little communicants," or "twenty" on another occasion, it is not in order to enumerate, but to record a mark of the kindness of their chief Pastor, who, "addresses the dear children a moving exhortation, and gives them

communion, as well as the nuns, from his own hand." Or the good bishop is present on a Passion-Sunday, and witnesses a little entertainment in honor of the mystery, at which "he manifests his entire satisfaction." When, at the beginning of the century, there is a terrible epidemy, and thirty-seven of the boarders are ill at one time, the annalist records the fact; but she does not tell us how many escaped the malady, only that the classes were suspended for want of teachers.

We see that from year to year, there is a gradual increase; new classes are formed, new class-rooms provided. The chapter on "The Monastery enlarged" (1717), has shown us the whole building adjoining the parlors, occupied by the boarders. A class of little Indian girls continued till about the year 1725; the day-school was, at all times formerly, far more numerous than that of the boarders.

Some of the pupils entered the convent very young, and remained seven or eight years. Generally, they came at the age of ten or eleven, to be prepared for their first communion, remaining from two to four or five years. The biographies of the nuns have enabled us to form these estimates; and to observe, at the same time, that a young girl of fourteen or fifteen was able to give proof of a maturity of judgment, and a decision of character, which at the present day, we hardly expect at eighteen. The phenomenon may not be easy to explain, but it must be admitted.

Could we now follow in spirit, through the devious paths of life, some of these former pupils; could we consult family records, as we have passed in review those of the cloister, it would complete, in a satisfactory manner, our appreciation of the value, and the effects of education in the eighteenth century.

When so competent a judge as Father Charlevoix, tells us, in 1720, "of a total absence of rusticity throughout the country;" that he found the colonists "most respectable for their probity, their candor and solid piety," we naturally attribute no small share of the merit to the good religious instruction the mothers of these families had received. Who knows not the influence of the mother on the rising generation? Who can doubt the truth of the aphorism of the old Bretons, upon which the ancient settlers of Canada seem to have acted: "It is better to instruct a little child than to gather wealth for him." We might fancy we hear one of those good Christian mothers imparting to her offspring the lessons of piety she had learned at the convent, in language as simple and sweet, as in the following song of the blind minstrel Hervé, the monastic bard of Armorica:

"Approach, my little children; come and hear a new song which I have composed expressly for you: take pains to remember it entirely.

"When you awake in your bed, offer your heart to the good God, make the sign of the Cross, and say with faith, hope, and love,

"Say: My God, I give thee my heart, my body and my soul: make me to be a good man, or else to die before my time.

"When you see a raven fly, think that sin is as black and wicked; when you see a little white dove fly, think that your soul, if pure, is as sweet and white."

Oh! happy the child that has a good mother. Never will her lessons of piety, her examples of virtue be totally effaced from the mind!

Let us now take a specimen of the names that occur on our lists, beginning by Miss Jeanne Le Ber, the admirable

recluse of Montreal. The piety of Jeanne, her tender love of God, and her desire to imitate the Child of Nazareth, in simplicity, in silence, in labor and humility, were manifest, even at the age of eleven and twelve, when she was an inmate of the convent, in 1675. She found companions of her fervor in such young ladies as the Misses Denis, des Granges, St. Amand, Neveu, La Forge, Nolan, Marie and Marguerite Le Gardeur, Marie Berthelot, Angélique de Lauson, etc.

Taking up the list at another date, we meet with the name of Miss Marie-Josephine Fezeret, followed by the three Misses des Meloises, the two Misses Villedonné, Marguerite Gravelle, etc.

Miss Fezeret affords us a noble example of energy and filial piety. Returning to her home in Montreal at the age of seventeen, she finds her family plunged in the deepest affliction. Her three brothers had fallen in battle where they had hoped to win glory and fortune; her aged parents, left without means, were disheartened and overwhelmed with the weight of their misfortunes. Miss Fezeret, far from adding to the afflictions of her family by her own despondency, exerts herself to find, if possible, a remedy for the indigence that threatened them. She draws up a petition to present to the Governor to obtain a grant of lands, "with all seigniorial rights," pleading the losses her family had sustained "in the King's service," and their present necessities, with such ability that she completely gains her cause. The Marquis de Vaudreuil assigns to the young claimant, in due form, a remnant of ungranted lands to which he gives the name of Bourg-Marie, under the title of fief and seigniority, "subject to fealty and homage to be rendered at the Castle of St. Louis in Quebec."

Miss Fezeret was destined to surround the declining years of her aged parents with joy and comforts, happy especially in having nobly fulfilled a noble duty. Her subsequent marriage with an officer of the navy, M. de Thiersant, seems to have been equally blessed by Heaven. The name of Madame Thiersant, found among the few who in ancient times obtained the privilege of "parlor-boarder," proves that she never forgot her convent-mothers, nor the cloister where she had spent her younger years.

Returning to our lists, we write with pleasure the name of Miss Aubert de la Chesnaye, one of the ancestors of the de Gaspé family, whose descendants appear at all dates down to the present day; the Misses de Chavigny, de la Gorgendiére, de Beaulieu, de la Tesserie; with the names equally ancient of Le Moine, des Groseilliers, de la Garenne, de Bécancourt, Migeon de Bransac, Bolduc, du Puy, Landron, Picard, Joly, etc.

Among the companions of the young captive, Esther Wheelwright, (1709) we may notice the daughter of the Governor her protector, Miss Elizabeth de Vaudreuil, placed in the convent at the same time; and, in their company, Misses Anne Denis de St. Simon, Charlotte Le Gardeur, Couillard, d'Ailleboust des Musseaux, du Mesnil, Duchesnay, Roy, etc., etc.

In 1712, the Monastery was edified by the youthful virtues of Miss Marguerite du Frost de la Jemmerais, better known to our readers by the name of the Venerable Madame d'Youville; who after experiencing the bitter vicissitudes of life, constituted herself the servant of the poor, the maimed, and the sick. After having triumphed over misfortune by the cheerful practice of the works of mercy, and endowed her country with that noble institution which bears the

time-honored name of *Sœurs Grises*, or Sisters of Charity, she now awaits, in company with our own Venerable Mother, the honors of Beatification.

Contemporary with the heroic example of Miss de la Jemmerais<sup>1</sup>, we find the admirable charity of the three daughters of the Governor of Montreal, the Misses De Ramesay. The six amiable sisters had passed through our classes, to the mutual satisfaction of teachers and pupils. The eldest, after a brief sojourn in her family, had returned to Quebec, and entered the General Hospital, where she lived nearly half a century, serving with angelic piety the suffering members of our Lord, for the sake of His love. The second, Marie-Catherine, bade a cheerful adieu to the enjoyments her position in society promised her, to become an Ursuline; Geneviève, the third, had accepted an alliance in the world.

The three youngest remained in their family, leading a life worthy of the cloister. Their chief delight was to succor the indigent, to visit and comfort the sick; ever ready to expose their health, or to endanger their life, if thereby they might procure relief for the distressed, or minister to the corporal or spiritual necessities of the dying.

One instance will suffice to show how they understood and practised the precept of charity.

In 1735, the city of Montreal was visited by a violent and fearful epidemy. The hospitals were soon filled with the sick and the dying. Nine of the hospital-sisters had fallen victims to the cruel malady, when by the interference of the ecclesiastical and the civil authority, limits were set to the

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1—Miss de la Jemmerais was daughter of a distinguished officer who served under the Marquis de Denonville; her mother was Miss René de Varennes. Several of her relatives were Ursulines; her three aunts were the Mothers de Varennes de la Présentation, du Muy de Ste. Hélène, Anne-Marie de Boucherville de St. Ignace. Mother Boucher de Boucherville de St. Pierre was her grand-aunt.

devotedness of the worthy nuns. The remainder of the community was ordered to quit the cloister and the city, in order to breathe the pure air in the country ; six only were excepted, and these offered the sacrifice of their lives, in order to continue serving the unfortunate sufferers in the hospital.

At this moment of terror and general consternation, the Misses de Ramesay did not abandon their usual post by the sick-bed. Knowing that the worst cases of the malady were assembled in the hospital, they hastened to offer their services to aid the nuns in their sublime act of charity, stipulating the following conditions in their own favor, namely : to have a place in the hospital, should they be attacked by the disease, and to be buried in the chapel of Our Lady of Good Help—the cemetery of the nuns—in case of death.

We must add that by a reciprocal act of generosity their offer was not accepted ; but who can doubt of the rewards it obtained in the sight of Him before whom the will has the same value as the deed ?

Let us take a few more names, selecting from the list published in the *Histoire du Monastère*, for the year 1722. There is mention of a little pupil's death, at the age of six years. The innocent child had her last resting-place in the cemetery reserved to the nuns, beneath the choir. She was the youngest of the three Misses Begon, who were all in the convent that year, the daughters of the Intendant M. Begon, Captain and Knight of St. Louis. The list reads on as follows : Misses Françoise de Lotbinière, Cartier, Puginbault, de Beaujeu, Thérèse d'Ailleboust, Félicité du Chesnay, Jeanne Pinguet-Vaucours, Lemieux, de la Chevrotière, de Léry, Baby, de Jonquières, Duguet, de Girardin, de la Croix, de Hertel, Boucher, de Niverville, the Misses Bissot, St. Ours Deschaillons, Bédard, Davis, Bonneau, St. Luc de la Corne.



etc, *Charlotte d'Anticosti* <sup>1</sup>, whose ancestor Louis Joliet, with Father Marquette, discovered the Mississippi river.

Let us mention, for the last time, the little forest girls, as boarders, having their separate class under the title of "*semi-nary*." From time to time, even after our Mothers had ceased to name them in their vow of instruction (1725), the missionaries would send some unprotected child to the convent, as in earlier days, but these were no longer little pagans to be instructed in the faith. The remnants of the Indian tribes along the lower St. Lawrence, which war and sickness had spared, had embraced Christianity; while their incapacity to adopt the civilization of European nations, had become an acknowledged fact. Henceforth, the devoted priests who continued to labor for the salvation of these natives of the great forests of America, found among them evident traces of a Christian mother's influence; and had less difficulty in instructing them in all that is needful for the service of God. We know that, as a judicious author <sup>2</sup> has remarked, "they often exhibited, by their lives, a simplicity and fervor of intelligent faith, which races, called superior, would do well to emulate."

How far the females among these tribes, who had formerly been taught in the convent, during a period of eighty years, may have aided the missionary in his godlike task, is only known to Him before whom all things stand revealed.

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1.—The reader who would see many curious details of genealogy, is referred to the lists published in the different Volumes of the *Histoire du Monastère*; the extracts printed here are taken from Vol. 2.

2.—Rev. X. D. MacLeod: *Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* in America, p. 166.

## CHAPTER XIII

1639 - 1739

## ANCIENT SUPERIORS OF THE COMMUNITY

MARY, PERPETUAL SUPERIOR OF THE URSULINES

A picture-gallery, hung with the portraits of our former Superiors, would not be, for the cloistered family, the least interesting part of the Monastery.

Placed in their order, after that of the Venerable first Superior, Mother Mary of the Incarnation, they would now amount to twenty-seven, ten of them belonging to the first centennial period, from 1639 to 1739.

Our readers are already familiar with the names of several of those Mothers, who had been called by divine Providence "to bear the heat and burden of the day," at the post of chief responsibility, while their Sisters enjoyed the enviable privilege, the merit and security of obedience. It may be said that the Superior, also, governing with humility and condescension, performs an act of meritorious obedience to the rule which so ordains, yet far happier is the private religious, who, without solicitude or anxiety, makes a safe and peaceful voyage, leaving to the watchful and care-worn pilot the charge of guiding the vessel.

The following list will serve as an introduction for the first ten Superiors of the Monastery of Quebec.

1. Ven. Mother Marie Guyart de l'Incarnation; Superior from 1639 to 1645; 1651 to 1657; 1663 to 1669.
2. Mother Marguerite de Flécelles de St. Athanase; from 1645 to 1651; 1657 to 1663; 1669 to 1676.
3. Mother Marie Gibault du Breuil de St. Joseph; from 1676 to 1682; 1688 to 1694.

4. Mother Marie Drouet de Jésus ; from 1682 to 1688 ; (also Superior at Three Rivers).
5. Mother Marie Le Maire des Angas ; from 1694 to 1700 ; 1712 to 1717 (also Superior at Three Rivers).  
(The following were professed in the Convent of Quebec) :
6. Mother Marie-Anne Bourdon de Ste. Agnès ; from 1700 to 1703.
7. Mother Angélique Poisson de St. Jean l'Evangéliste ; from 1703 to 1706 ; 1717 to 1723 ; 1726 to 1732.
8. Mother Catherine Pinguet de l'Incarnation ; from 1706 to 1712.
9. Mother Marie Amiot de la Conception ; from 1732 to 1725.
10. Mother Marie Anceau de Ste. Thérèse ; from 1723 to 1736 ; (also 19 years at Three Rivers).

The 11th Superior elected in 1735, was Mother Migeon de la Nativité.

Mother Drouet of Jesus.—After the decease of our Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation (1672) and Mother St. Athanasius (1695), the first to pay the debt of nature, among these ancient Superiors, was Mother Marie Drouet of Jesus, (1709).

She was no longer an inmate of the convent of Quebec, but at the head of the Ursulines of Three Rivers, a post she had occupied to the entire satisfaction of that little community for the space of nine years.

During the second term of her superiority at Quebec, the burning of the convent, (1686), and the subsequent hardships attendant on the accident, gave her such trials as, happily, but few are called to bear ; but her energy, her piety and submission to Divine Providence, rendered her equal to the emergency. Her tender devotion to the mystery of the Infancy of Our Lord, was perhaps the secret of the piety, meekness and charity which characterized her as a Superior, and which made of her a perfect religious. She has left us a perpetual legacy of that devotion, in the commemoration of the Saviour's birth, renewed on the 25th of each month, by singing a hymn and an anthem, before the altar dedicated to

the Infant Jesus. Mother Mary of Jesus, at her death, had attained the age of seventy-five years, of which fifty-seven had been spent in the cloister.

Two years later (1711), there was mourning for another ex-Superior, our beloved Mother Anne Bourdon of St. Agnes, one of the early pupils of our Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation. In the obituary notice of this good Mother, we perceive a strain of tenderness, unusual even on those pages which ever breathe of charity. "We have lost our *dear and well-beloved* Mother St. Agnes," says the writer. "This good Mother is deeply regretted by all her Sisters, to whom she had greatly endeared herself in every way. The many virtues which adorned her life, the many amiable exterior qualities which distinguished her rendered her a real treasure for our community..... The close of a peaceful and meritorious life was in the embrace of the Lord, sweet and holy, leaving us all filled with the desire of imitating the examples she has left us."

Mother St. Agnes is entitled to the lasting gratitude of our Monastery, particularly for her labors as annalist. To her faithful pen we owe the summary or narrative of the first forty-eight years of the history of the Convent, replacing the regular annals, which had perished in 1686. Once charged with the care of consigning to paper the details of passing events, her discrimination is as remarkable as her style. Her historical narrations, neither too brief, nor yet redundant, are full of vigor and animation.

One of the last articles that fell from her pen, still firm at the age of seventy, although not so active as when she commenced some thirty years previous, is the account of the expedition of the American colonists against Canada, in 1711, the result of which was still impending at her decease.

It closes with these words so expressive, and so characteristic of the lively faith of the writer: "Our enemies trust in their multitude and in their strength; but for us, O Lord, our sole hope is in Thy protection."

At the decease of Mother Gibault du Breuil of St. Joseph, (1715) the new annalist declares she can find no expressions "to give an adequate idea of the merit, the rare qualities the many virtues of this dear and venerable Mother." She had spent forty-four years in Canada, contributing zealously to the solid establishment of this convent, to which she had given her services in 1671.

The last year of her life she was enabled to contribute to its welfare in a manner most crucifying to nature. It was no longer her part to guide others, but she needed the helping hand of kind sisters even to pass from one apartment to another. Blind and helpless, she found in the charity of compassionate hearts and in her own complete resignation to the will of Providence, the only alleviation her sufferings admitted. Borne several years with admirable meekness and patience, these infirmities were the crucible wherein the virtues which Mother St. Joseph had long practised, became as the fine gold purified by fire. She expired, surrounded by the consolations of religion, aged sixty-two.

There was still left one survivor of our beloved French Mothers. Her recent re-election to the office of Superior at the advanced age of seventy-five proved in what estimation the community held Mother Marie Le Maire of the Angels.

We have mentioned already her solicitude for the establishment of the Ursulines at Three Rivers, where she held the office of Superior six years. She had discharged the same duties here, during seventeen years, when arrived the peace-

ul close of her useful life, in 1717. Four times during the autumn of that year, did the beautiful ceremony of a reception rejoice the heart of the aged Superior, who congratulated herself, with reason, on witnessing such a conquest of grace as the vocation of Miss de Ramesay and her companions.

All around the convent, during that fall, workmen had been busy laying vast foundations for a church ; too vast, unfortunately, so that much of the labor had to be abandoned, and recommenced on another plan. Mother Mary of the Angels continued to acquit herself of her duties as Superior, in addition to the cares and difficulties that attended the work of building. But winter had now set in, and a few days given to a retreat would be rest for body and mind : or, was it a presentiment of her approaching dissolution that caused the venerable Mother to withdraw from her usual occupations, to attend to the grave question of her own progress in perfection ? Certainly, no one else foresaw that the Angel of death was hovering near, prepared to strike a blow that would plunge the whole cloistered family in grief. The exercises, commenced with such fervor, were speedily interrupted.

The beloved Superior, seriously ill, became at once the object of the most tender and anxious care. The skill of the best physicians was called in requisition, while the sympathy manifested by the Bishop and clergy, as well as by many of the citizens and their families, showed how they all appreciated the worth of the pious nun. The sentiments of the community, when, after a few days of suffering, a life of piety and zeal was crowned by a happy death, are summed up in the concluding line of her notice, in the annals : "God alone can console us for such a loss."

The honorable and much esteemed relatives of Mother Le Maire of the Angels are ranked among the benefactors

of the Monastery. Their liberality was experienced on many occasions, particularly after the disaster of 1686. Among other acts of beneficence, the Ursulines of the present day must be particularly sensible to their delicate attention, in procuring for the community the portraits of our Venerable Mother Marie de l'Incarnation and Madame de la Peltrie, after the loss of the original paintings in the second conflagration of the Monastery.

How often have we had occasion to remark that when the Divine Master removes a person eminently useful, he has another in reserve to supply her place in the community, that the work,—His work—may suffer no interruption.

Thus it proved when Mother Angelique Poisson of St. John was selected, to replace the lamented Mother Mary of the Angels (1717).

This seventh Superior whose long services in the community have merited a special return of love and gratitude, was also the seventh professed choir-sister in the Convent of Quebec.

From the seigniorial manor of Gentilly, opposite Three Rivers, the youthful Angélique had passed to our classes, and to the maternal care of our Venerable Mother Marie de l'Incarnation, at the age of eleven, in 1662. The epoch of her first Communion, impressed her heart remarkably through the sweet influences of piety; and the love of God ever afterwards continued to be the ruling principle of her actions. In her studies, her success was assured by her natural talents, a good memory, taste and judgment. "She was fond of reading, expressed herself with facility in conversation, and still more gracefully in writing."

Our nineteenth century prudence may take alarm when we hear of her exchanging, at the age of fourteen years

and a half, the title of pupil for that of candidate for the religious life : albeit, after considering her long career, usefully employed in the instruction of youth, and in the government of the Monastery, we must submit to the opinion of those who were judges on the occasion, and regard her as " a person of rare and precocious intelligence."

Called by the vote of the community to fill the place left vacant by the decease of the regretted Mother Mary of the Angels, we have seen her at the age of sixty-six, take the lead in aiding with her own hands in the building of the church.

She had retained the vigor of the prime of life to the advanced age of eighty-one, and was again at the post of duty, by the voice of election, when a sudden failure of her usual good health obliged her to desist from her ordinary occupations. Reposing at the infirmary for a few days, she thought to turn time to good account by making a review of her past life, and sent for her confessor to consult upon the matter with him, and receive the sacrament of penance. His mission was just over ; the conventual door had not closed behind him, when he was recalled in all haste to administer the sacrament of the dying. The dear Mother, in the unutterable peace of a soul just purified by absolution, had time to receive extreme unction, when her spirit, as angelic as her name, passed to the bosom of the God she had so faithfully served. Mother Angélique of St. John had celebrated the sixty-second anniversary of her religious profession, when her death occurred, in 1732.

In their grief for so sudden a loss, our Mothers hesitated to proceed, immediately, to the election of another Superior. The Bishop provided for a delay by appointing to that office, of his own authority, Mother Marie Anceau of St. Teresa.



The worthy Mother thus placed at the head of our community, had but lately returned from Three Rivers, in hopes of resting from the charge which she had long exercised there.

The early life of Mother St. Teresa was, in many points, but the counterpart of that of her predecessor, Mother St. John. Sent to our classes as boarder at a tender age, while our Venerable Mother was Superior, she pursued her studies during nine years, without regretting the parental mansion at Three Rivers, or sighing for the delights which the unknown future is wont to promise the youthful imagination. Without returning to the world, which she may be said to have known only by report, she joined that little band of novices who, in 1672, lost an incomparable mother-mistress, but who never forgot her nor her instructions. Mother St. Teresa's whole life breathed of innocence, simplicity, and goodness of heart. Skilful with her needle as with her pen; patient, devoted, pious, and laborious, she was eminently qualified for the instruction of youth, and was almost exclusively employed in teaching, until her services, as Superior, were required at Three Rivers. There, she guided that community in a most satisfactory manner, during nineteen years.

A few months after her release from that office, which had been imposed upon her anew in our Monastery, as we have seen, she passed peacefully to her eternal repose (1735), at the age of seventy-eight, greatly regretted as she had been much beloved.

Two ex-Superiors were still living in 1739, when occurred the hundredth anniversary: Mothers Marie Pinguet of the Incarnation, and Marie Amiot of the Conception. The latter had yet to see the year 1747, and attain the age of eighty-

five, completing seventy years of religious life. Their names will occur later.

For the present, let us suspend the review of our "gallery of portraits," beneath each of which we have inscribed R. I. P. ; for the Ursulines have a Superior who is not subject to change nor death.

OUR PERPETUAL SUPERIOR

THE IMMACULATE VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

In every religious order, there is a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin. It is with her example in view that, in all Christian ages, so many young maidens have separated themselves from the pretended glories and pleasures of the world, seeking in vigils, fastings, and humble charity, to render themselves worthy of being numbered in her train.

For the Ursulines, it is a peculiar consolation and privilege to remember that they are bound by an article of their Constitutions, "to cultivate a tender devotion to the Mother of God;" and the motive of the precept is, at the same time, an encouragement. It is "that by her intercession, and especial protection, they may labor more fruitfully to form Jesus-Christ in the hearts of young girls, instilling into their souls her excellent virtues, according to their institute."

Another article of the same code makes the following provisions :

"In every convent, the Blessed Virgin shall be especially chosen for first and chief Superior, which election shall be made in the following manner :

"On the day appointed by the proper authority, all the religious of the community being assembled in a chapel, wherein has been placed a statue of Our Lady, holding in her sacred arms the Infant Jesus, they shall invoke the

Holy Ghost by singing the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus*. Then some prayer to the Mother of God shall be read, after which the Mother Superior shall place the keys of the convent at the foot of the statue; and, all kneeling, she shall offer her charge, and the convent, to Our Lady by some devout form of consecration."

This solemn act of homage and fealty, the Superior pronounces in these words:

"Most holy and most worthy Mother of God, Queen of heaven and earth, Temple of the most august Trinity, Refuge of sinners and of all who have placed their confidence in thy protection; behold us humbly prostrate at thy feet, while we promise in presence of the Blessed Trinity and of all the heavenly Court, to take and hold thee as our special Mother, Queen, and Protectress, beseeching thee from the depths of our hearts, to adopt and protect in a particular manner this community as thy possession. We choose and acknowledge thee for our first and chief Superior, desiring to depend upon thee in the most absolute manner. And I, Sister N. N., most unworthy Superior, do resign this charge into thy hands, reserving to myself no right to exercise it but in submission to thee; placing myself and all this house under thy direction and conduct; rendering thee the homage, honor and obedience due to thee from us, in the quality of most loyal subjects and most humbly devoted children." Next is sung the *Nos cum prole pia, &c.*, "do Thou with thy Divine Son, O Virgin most benignant, give us thy blessing!" All incline to receive it, and immediately intoning the *Te Deum laudamus*, the Mother Superior advances to render homage, by kneeling to kiss the feet of the statue of the Blessed Virgin. All the community follow, in turn, passing in procession, while the grand old hymn is sung to the end. This act, which recalls so vividly the "fealty and homage" of

feudal times, was performed for the first time in the "Great Convent" of Paris, in 1638.

Here, it dates from the year 1650, having been made known to our Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation by the two Parisian nuns, Mothers St. Athanasius and St. Clare.

One who has assisted at the touching ceremony, taking part in it as personally interested, needs not the aid of fancy, to feel herself deeply moved by the simple pathos of the language, the piety of the scene, and the earnest tone of the Superior's voice pronouncing the form of consecration. She need not picture to herself that first act of homage, just before the conflagration of the monastery, when the voice of the foundress intoned that hymn of thanksgiving for favors and trials, past and future, both being equally the gift of Heaven. Nor need she recall to mind that the same pious sanctuary where she kneels, has witnessed for the past century and a half, the triennial recurrence of the same solemn homage to the Mother of God. All the former Superiors, from the time of the gentle Mother St. John who saw the chapel first finished, down to the present day, have here successively offered themselves and the community, to constitute the rightful inheritance and possession of the Queen of Heaven.

On these occasions, Our Lady of Great Power descends from her loftier pedestal, as if to render herself more accessible to her most loyal and cherished subjects. Her throne is all aglow with lights and decorations. More than by the splendor, we may be attracted by the titles of Our Blessed Lady, written in large gilded characters upon the base of the four pilasters beside the altar:

MARIA, REGINA VIRGINUM, DIRIGE NOS! MARIA MATER  
URSULINARUM, PROTEGE NOS! Yes! O Queen of Virgins, O

Mother of Ursulines! direct us, protect us, thy children, thy subjects. Succor and defend us, O Mother of Mercy, O Queen of Martyrs! MARIA, MATER MISERICORDIÆ, SUCCURRE NOBIS. MARIA, REGINA MARTYRUM, DEFENDE NOS.

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## CHAPTER XIV

1639

### THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

For the splendor of public worship, the decoration of altars, and the celebration of religious festivals, the present generation must yield the palm to the past. Reading of these things in the early times in Canada, is like obtaining a glimpse of the middle ages.

The hundredth anniversary of the arrival of the Ursulines on this continent of America, was not one of the least of those occasions, when the population of Quebec, uniting in one sentiment, seem, like the first Christians, to have but one heart and one soul. The renovating fervor of the community at that period reminds us of the cenacle, where the disciples of the Lord prayed with such ardor that the Holy Ghost descended visibly upon them, filling them with new zeal for accomplishing the divine mission with which they were entrusted.

A whole year was not too long to prepare for the great day.

But let the annalist herself, tell us how these things were done.

“ To dispose ourselves for the celebration of our hundredth anniversary, and in order that it might be for our commu-

nity a motive for a more perfect renovation, returning thanks to God for the innumerable benefits bestowed upon the Monastery during the past century, we began our preparations a year beforehand. On the 1st of August, 1738, being assembled in the chapel to listen to an exhortation on the subject, one of our good Fathers addressed us in a manner well calculated to inspire us with the fervor that animated our ancient Mothers, as well as with their zeal for the instruction of youth, and the conversion of the poor people of these countries, in laboring for whom they consumed their lives.

" Penetrated with the liveliest gratitude towards God, we determined to testify it by giving more time than usual to prayer : for this purpose we prolonged nearly all our ordinary pious exercises.

" On Fridays, three were appointed in turn to observe silence, refraining from the usual recreations, and adding several acts of mortification and of other virtues.

" All our young Sisters desired to renew the exercises preparatory to profession, performing them with fervor, in order to draw down upon this house a continuation of the divine favor. Finally, on the approach of the great solemnity, the 1st of August, 1739, the anniversary of that day on which our worthy foundresses, Madame de la Peltrie, Venerable Mother Marie Guyart de l'Incarnation, Mother Marie de Savonnières de St. Joseph, and Mother Cécile Richer de Ste. Croix, arrived in Quebec, all the community entered upon a retreat.

" The renovation of our vows had been postponed until this day, instead of taking place according to custom, on the Monday after Pentecost.

" All then was in readiness for the commemorative services, when the sudden decease of an aged and beloved

Mother obliged us to defer the rejoicings to the octave. The festivity of our centennial anniversary had been announced to the people, with an Indulgence accorded by Our Holy Father, Innocent X., not only for ourselves, but for the people who desired to participate in the celebration. On the day preceeding, at noon, the chimes of the cathedral-bells mingled with ours, to announce the festival ; and this was renewed during the three days with the same solemnity.

The triduum was opened by the canons of the cathedral, who did us the honor of coming to celebrate High Mass, Vespers, and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, closing the exercises by singing the *Te Deum*.

" The second festival was solemnized by the clergy from the seminary, attended by their students and ecclesiastics, in a similar manner. The third and last day belonged to the Franciscans.

" All the Fathers came in procession, singing the *Te Deum*, and after celebrating mass, returned in the same order to the chimes of the cathedral-bells and ours. The good Fathers of the Society of Jesus preached on each of the three days.

" Of the alms that were distributed we need not take note. The clergy, as well as the religious communities, were entertained at our expense and to the best of our power. The concourse in our church was great during the three days, the people being attracted by the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, which commenced at four o'clock in the morning and ended only at five in the afternoon.

" The church, where every thing was fresh and new, was richly decorated without the loan of ornaments, and all was pronounced to be in good taste. The walls, newly finished, were hung with paintings. In the large grating, six elegant silvered candelabra, each bearing fourteen tapers, were sus-

pended, producing a fine effect. A large chandelier hung in front of the chapel of the Sacred Heart, and another, bearing also twenty-two tapers, adorned the nave.

During the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, four hundred tapers were lighted, comprising those of the altar in the choir, which was also brilliantly decorated.

"Between the three statues that ornament the portal of the church, hung the portraits of our worthy foundresses, Madame de la Peltrie, Venerable Mother Marie de l'Incarnation, and Mother St. Joseph.

"Beneath the portraits were inscriptions in poetry, mentioning some of their heroic actions. An address to the people was not forgotten, all being placed at a convenient height to be easily read. The frames of the portraits, as well as the inscriptions, were black, with gilded ornament. Before the church-door, young fir-trees, planted in several rows, presented a pretty sight and afforded an agreeable shade. During these three days, there were constantly priests at the two altars, celebrating the Holy Sacrifice, from four o'clock in the morning till noon. Could we do too much to thank the Almighty for the blessings showered down in such profusion on this house since its first establishment?

"The same motive induced us to sacrifice a part of the silver plate, belonging to the infirmary, in order to make a sanctuary lamp, with which the church had not yet been furnished.

"The solemnity ended by a High Mass, celebrated at the demand of the Indians, who attended it and sang the *Kyrie*, the *Credo*, etc. After mass they delivered harangues, in their usual flowery style, addressed to the nuns in the parlor. In return, the nuns offered them a good substantial banquet, to which they did ample honor.

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" Not wishing to have our dear deceased Mothers excluded from this festival, we had fifteen masses celebrated for their repose, as well as to thank God for His great mercies upon our community, and to beg a continuation thereof.

Nothing was wanting, therefore, to render this celebration a " success," except the presence of the chief Pastor of the diocese, Bishop Dosquet, who was absent in France, where he had gone to resign the charge he had held since 1733.

One of the inscriptions read as follows :

Behold the Christian heroines advance,  
Affronting peril with intrepid glance :  
All fearless, braving Ocean's angry wave,  
Immortal souls from endless death to save.  
And, now One Hundred years have passed away,  
Since first these countries hailed the happy day,  
When landing, they embrace the cherished soil,  
Which they will render fertile by their toil.  
They lived angelic lives ; they loved the cross ;  
They counted every earthly gain as dross  
They taught the redman, and his child, the road  
That leads to that bright world, now their abode.  
And every Christian maid, or mother, here,  
Blesses the day when Ursulines appear,  
To train the youthful mind ; to guard from ill,  
And teach them life's high destiny to fill.  
All honor, then to those who led the way !  
For if beneath the Convent-roof to-day,  
So many souls are laboring for Heaven,  
All glory to the Foundresses be given !  
Grant, thou, O Lord, that blessings may increase  
From age to age, around this house of peace !  
And let it flourish, like a goodly vine,  
For 'tis Thine own ! let all its fruit be Thine !

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Another inscription takes the form of an epigram ; and both are evidently written by pens beyond the enclosure of the monastery :

One hundred years this house has stood,  
 Yet all within is firm and good.  
 Without reform the charter stands ;  
 Thus let it pass to younger hands :  
 For where no rotten wood is found,  
 It kills the tree to bark it round.

## CHAPTER XV

1739

### DEPARTURES DURING THE CENTENNIAL YEAR. COINCIDENCE OF NAMES

At the dawn of the centennial year of 1739, the community was composed of fifty-three professed nuns ; fifty-three others, during that period of a hundred years, had passed to a better life. Thus the family above, was already as large as that which was preparing the festive celebration here below ; and doubtless there were rejoicings also in that better world.

A fresh accession to their number in the course of the year, a deputation, one would say, from the community on earth to that in heaven, presents a curious coincidence of names, at such an epoch.

Our readers all remember those three first nuns whose arrival illustrates the date, 1639 : Mothers Mary of the Incarnation, Ste. Croix and St. Joseph. The departure of three others of nearly the same name, marks the obituary list, in 1739. The first was Mother *Marie* de Repentigny

of St. Agatha, who although she bore not the same name as Mother *Marie* de la Troche of St. Joseph, had lived about the same number of years in religion. The second death that occurred interrupted the centennial celebration. It was Mother Marie-Catherine Pinguet of the *Incarnation*; the third was Mother Marie-Elizabeth d'Ailleboust de *Ste. Croix*.

Madame de la Peltrie had also her representative in one of the boarders, Miss des Meloises, who died in the Convent, at the age of twelve years, and by a rare privilege, was buried in the cemetery of the nuns.

A few pages must here be dedicated to the memory of the three venerable Mothers, whom we might call the witnesses of what the preceding pages have described :

Who then, was this aged Mother Marie-Catherine of the *Incarnation*, who after a year's preparation to celebrate the great anniversary, contenting herself with the renovation of her vows with her community and sharing the spiritual rejoicings of the 1st August, 1739, hastens to join the choirs above, before the public festival takes place ?

The faithful pen of olden times tells us that just near Quebec, on the Island of Orleans, a bright and happy home awaited Marie-Catherine as she left the Convent, in 1675, at the age of fourteen : but its attractions were not so strong nor so sweet as were those of an interior voice, calling her to a life of separation from the world and all its pleasing, but fallacious prospects. Her generous-hearted Christian parents had already, some ten years previous, consented to be deprived of the company of their eldest daughter, Marie Madeleine, who had consecrated herself to God among our Ursulines. Could they now resist the pleadings of Marie Catherine ? They might have objected that her health was delicate and

her frame of the most fragile mould ; but the fervor of the youthful aspirant anxious only to obey Him, who is the Master of our destiny, overcame all obstacles.

The novitiate was opened to her, and doubtless she might have written to her parents in such words as the following :

"No language can describe the peace and happiness of mind I enjoy. Fear not for me ; I shall continue to be happy, for I have *given myself without reserve to God* and His holy Church." The months of probation passed quickly by, and the approach of a great day filled the fervent novice with new joy.

We have witnessed in spirit on the 30th April, 1677, the ever touching ceremony of taking the veil, when, with the livery of the spouse of Christ, she received the venerated and beloved name of Marie de l'Incarnation.

The future career marked out for that delicate young novice was a sealed book before her, as it is for us all. Her only care was to accomplish from day to day, with cheerful heart, the rule she had embraced, which is an epitome of the Gospel counsels of perfection, conforming her will to that of Divine Providence, in the various trials and even hardships which awaited her on more than one occasion, in common with the rest of the community.

After many years devoted to the care and instruction of the pupils in the boarding-school, she was called to hold, during six years, the office of Superior, and, at various times, that of assistant, zelatrix, or mistress of novices. The novitiate must have derived great benefit from the direction of a person endowed with such prudence, meekness and piety ; and we observe that she was re-appointed to that important office, even at an advanced age in the last years of her life. These are the principal services our second Mother of the Incarnation

was enabled to render her community. Were they not sufficient to justify her in the choice of her vocation ? and also to justify Divine Providence in calling her to abandon the paternal mansion, where she had indeed a pleasant home, but subject like all others on the face of the wide world, to change, to sorrow, and to the gradual dissolving of its tenderest ties by death ?

At length, the summons to quit her adopted family of the cloister came ; but she was not to know the grief of a parting scene, nor the dread of that last hour, so terrible even to the just. A slight indisposition, so it seemed, a sudden prostration of her strength, which had caused her to lose consciousness for a few moments, during the night of the 1st of August, retained the venerable religious in the infirmary all the next day, but without any definite pain, fever, or other alarming symptom. It was a Sunday, the 2nd of August. The celebration of the centennial jubilee by the public was to take place on Monday. In the mean time, as evening came on, there was a sudden alarm within the Monastery. Their venerated Mother of the Incarnation had sunk, as in a swoon, into her arm-chair to which she had walked from her bed. She seemed to be dying, yet the physician, who had been sent for in the course of the day, had found her in no danger.

In a few moments she had passed away, all gently, as the ripened leaf in autumn drops from its stem and falls silently to the ground.

It was a death unlooked-for, but not unprepared : and although it changed the accents of thanksgiving to those of mourning, yet each one felt that it was the Angel of mercy that had snapped the silver thread of life, just as it was brightest in the sight of Heaven !

On the 4th of September, the annalist writes again with tears :

" The Almighty who has decreed that perfect happiness shall never be ours in this life, has permitted the rejoicings of our hundredth anniversary to be followed by redoubled afflictions, in the sudden death of another of our venerable ancient mothers. But yesterday our beloved Mother Marie-Elizabeth d'Ailleboust of Ste. Croix, was apparently in perfect health. She had served at table in the refectory all the week ; she assisted at the recreation, and at the divine office with us last evening. This morning, at four o'clock, the sister who awakens the community, entering her cell, found her at the point of death, speechless and apparently unconscious. The physician was sent for in all haste, as well as our confessor. They found her dying. She had merely time to receive a last absolution, and extreme unction, when she gently breathed her last. It is impossible to say what had caused her death, the physician finding no sign of apoplexy nor any other known malady."

Our readers have recognized in the family name of our beloved Mother Ste. Croix, that of the third Governor of the colony : she was his grand-niece. Her father was Charles d'Ailleboust, seigneur des Musseaux, and her mother, Catherine Le Gardeur de Repentigny. They have also called to mind that they assisted, in spirit, at the ceremony of her reception in 1689, in the temporary chapel beneath the present community-hall.

Her contemporaries tell us how she bore for fifty years, with happiness, the sweet yoke of the Lord, serving Him in a spirit of love, and with so lively a faith in His presence that her whole exterior bore its impress. The remembrance of the sacred mysteries of the Passion of Our Saviour pos-

sessed her soul to such a degree that she had learned to disregard her own sufferings, while His cross had given her the secret of voluntary humiliations. Providence favored her pious inclinations, by appointing her often to those duties which had to be performed chiefly in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar: namely those of sacristine (vestry-nun) and of mistress of ceremonies at the divine office, where her magnificent voice found its mission, leading the choir, and chanting the praises of God. "To this true daughter of the Church the least of its ceremonies was sacred; and to see her take holy water or make the sign of the cross, was enough to convince the beholder that she was penetrated with a lively faith." Was it not a reward of her devotion to the Sacred Heart to be called to appear before the divine tribunal on that first Friday of the month?—the day on which she had sung for so many years that touching hymn: *O Cor amoris Victima*, "O Heart of Jesus, Victim of love! be thou my protection in all the tribulations and sorrows of life! above all, at the hour of my death, say thou to my soul: Behold! I am thy salvation!"

The name of Mother Amiot of the Conception carries us far back into the preceding century. She entered the convent (1677) only five years after the decease of our Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation; and when her own death occurred in 1747, she had seen seventy summers within the cloister. She had lived twenty-four years with Mother St. Ignatius (Miss Charlotte Barré), eighteen with that first Parisian superior, Mother St. Athanasius and forty with Mother Le Maire des Anges.

She is named among the foundresses of the Ursulines of Three Rivers; and during her long career of usefulness here

in Quebec, she was called, at various times, to fill the most laborious as well as the highest offices.

Let us, dear reader, rest a few moments in the company of this venerated Mother Amiot of the Conception, who has spent the greater part of her days in the shadow of the sanctuary, and see what her example will teach us.

Our annals picture her in the freshness of "sweet thirteen," an only child, led by her fond mother into the midst of those brilliant circles of pleasure which constituted the fashionable world of Quebec at that time; yet despising the vain show and rejecting the allurements of society as an unworthy slavery, while as yet her inexperience could not have fathomed the emptiness, nor suspected the dangers of the cup that was presented her.

Permitted, at her earnest request, to re-enter the convent as boarder, her instinctive disgust for the world served as a preparation for the grace of a special attraction for the things of God; and before the completion of her fifteenth year, she had obtained for her portion the liberty of the servants of Jesus-Christ, the privilege of adopting His Cross as her only inheritance.

From the day she was clothed with the livery of the spouse of Christ to that later period when she wore lightly the burthen of her fourscore years, she shed around her the sweet odor of edification, the bright and shining example of every virtue.

Need we follow her from year to year through the various labors assigned her in the house of God? Here all offices are of the same value, when their duties are fulfilled with equal perfection. Her talents fitted her for all, and her piety rendered all sweet and profitable to herself and to the community.



Now we behold her as the special advocate of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, winning souls to love Him by words of burning zeal, while she writes out the tickets of the Association, and inscribes the long register of names from the time it is opened (1700) to her dying day. Now, with alacrity she busies herself in adorning the altar, dedicated to that sweet mystery, or, passing to the chapel of Saints, even in the severest cold of the winter, she decorates with filial care the shrine of Our Lady of Great Power.

Although she has become the most aged in the community, we find her working with her needle as deftly as at the age of fifteen, fitting in the shades of silk as colors from the nicest painter's palette, or wreathing for some country church, leaves and flowers into such tasteful sprays as could be surpassed only by nature herself. Then the younger nuns press around her, won as much by her grace and affability, as by her exquisite skill. How often, while guiding their willing fingers to round the opening moss-rose, or spread the dazzling petals of the lily, would the good Mother describe the church of Madame de la Peltrie and the altars once decorated by Mother Mary of the Incarnation, relating many an unwritten trait of those "good old times." How often would she express her deep conviction of the heroic sanctity of the venerable Mother, adding an ardent wish to see her name on the list of canonized Saints! That was indeed the frequent subject of her conversations with her sisters, and the unvarying object of her prayers. The zeal and the talents of Mother Amiot of the Conception, would have rendered her a fit instrument in promoting the cause of the canonization, had the times been more propitious for such an undertaking.

In concluding her obituary, the annalist remarks: "Although our dear Mother Mary of the Conception was

eighty-five years old, she had none of the usual infirmities of that advanced age. We had hoped to keep her among us a few years longer, but she was ripe for heaven. Our Blessed Lord, whom she had so often crowned with flowers in the Sacrament of his love, wished to crown her with glory in His kingdom."

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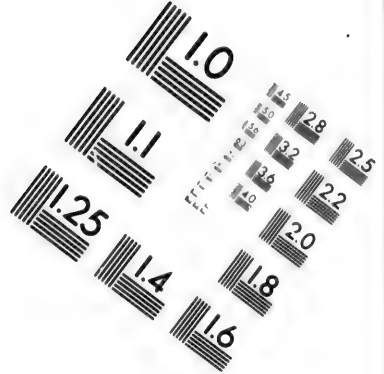
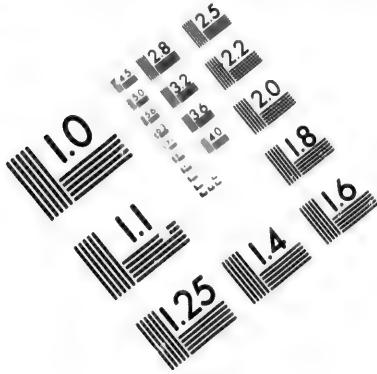
## CHAPTER XVI

### PRIMITIVE TIMES AND MANNERS

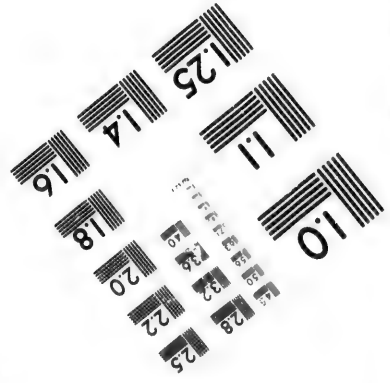
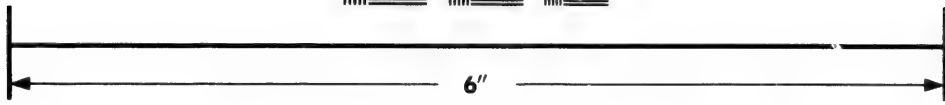
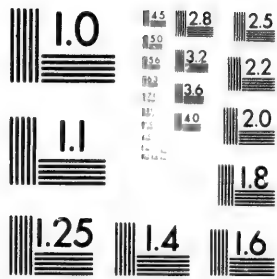
CANADIAN SEIGNIORS. MISS ROBINEAU DE BECANCOUR. MISS DE BOUCHERVILLE.

Associated with the memory of our ancient Mothers, there often rises a charming picture of the life and manners of those primitive times of which the Canadian people are so justly proud.

Thus do we recall to mind, with the name of Mother Marie-Anne Robineau of the Trinity, the stately manor and the vast domains which constituted the baronies of Becancour and Portneuf. The seigniorial mansion and chapel of stone, bearing the insignia of nobility, were surrounded by all the buildings required for a large retinue of servants, horses, and equipages. There were besides, the spacious farm-yard, the parks, and the never failing grist-mill. The worthy baron enjoyed by royal patent, "the right of arms, heraldic honors, rank and precedence, like the other barons of the kingdom of France"; yet, with his high prerogatives, the aged Seigneur led a life which the historian Charlevoix, when receiving hospitality at the manor, likened to that of the ancient patriarchs, sharing the labors of agriculture with his vassals, and living as frugally as they.



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Perhaps the absence of his daughter had diminished the gaiety of the household, for according to our traditions, Mother Robineau of the Trinity, during the three years she had passed under the paternal roof, had been afforded an ample share of amusements, dress, dancing, and the usual round of fashionable pastimes. The remembrance of these gay soirées, which she used to call gay follies, was not of a nature to inspire her with regret. She could only despise the tyranny of custom which could induce people to "pass the whole night in bowing and courtesying, as in the ancient minuet, in the midst of a brilliantly illuminated hall."

Her own memory has come down to us with far sweeter associations. Mother Ann of the Trinity, as a religious was the personification of fervent piety. When we read that "during forty years she retained, at her own request, the office of ringing the bell to awaken the community at four o'clock," we feel that we need not pursue her notice further to know "of what spirit she was."

Let us bring before us next another picture of the olden times, in the family of our ancient and venerated Mother Geneviève Boucher de Boucherville, in religion, Mother St. Pierre. Here we find something more intimate to contemplate; it is the secret intentions, the very heart of the ancient Governor of Three Rivers, the Honorable Pierre Boucher, who seems to us one of the noblest types of the Christian gentleman. For his probity and disinterestedness, his valor and merit, he had been endowed by the French monarch with titles of nobility, and the grant of an important tract of land along the St. Lawrence. The question with this dignitary, who was the father of a large family, was whether to remain in Three Rivers or to go and settle

on his lands. The project had been meditated at leisure and the motives for adopting it are written down. The questions were not : " How many thousands of livres will this speculation bring me ? Are the risks balanced by the probabilities of success ? " nor any of the usual calculations in similar circumstances. We read—and feel instructed as we read—as follows :

" I have determined to settle on my lands of Boucherville for the following reasons ; and I write them in order never to forget the motives that have influenced my determination and the engagements to which I pledge myself.

" I wish also my successors to know my intentions and fulfil them, unless indeed they can do more for the glory of God.

" 1. It is in order that there may be a place where the inhabitants, living in peace and harmony, may serve God sincerely, without fear of being troubled or molested.

" 2. That I may live more retired from the world and its vain amusements, which only make us forget God, and thus more conveniently labor to assure my own salvation and that of my family.

" 3. That I may by the most lawful means increase my riches, provide for my family, and procure for my children a good and virtuous education, befitting the state of life which they may embrace.

" 4. The land being mine, I think it my duty to settle there as a means of being useful to society.

" 5. In order to have the means of doing more good to my neighbor, and aiding those who are in want, than I am able to do in my present position, where my revenue is insufficient for the good works I wish to perform.

" For the success of my undertaking, I place my trust in God, begging His faithful servant, Father de Brebeuf, to

protect me in my attempt, if it be for the glory of God and the salvation of my family ; if otherwise, I pray that I may not succeed, desiring nothing but to accomplish the will of Heaven."

With intentions so pure and elevated, the noble Christian resigned to another the office of governor, and removed to his new domain. The ample blessings of Heaven were poured down on the rising settlement and on every member of the pious household. Of fifteen children who surrounded the table of the *Seigneur de Boucherville*, two sons became priests and served God in the sanctuary with zeal and fidelity ; one daughter consecrated herself to God as an Ursuline. It was Geneviève, the eleventh child, the one who, according to the father's testimony " loved him the best," and who, in fact, seems to have resembled him most in character.

While his eldest son continues the succession and title of de Boucherville, his daughters present us by their alliances, the honorable names of de Grandpré, de Grosbois, de Montbrun, de Laperrière, de Niverville, de Varennes, de Muy, de Sabrevois, and Le Gardeur de Tilly.

Another document, portraying the heart of the venerable ancestor of the de Boucherville, who died in 1717, at the age of ninety-five, in the odor of sanctity, has been preserved to posterity, and is known as the " Legacy of grandfather Boucher. <sup>1</sup> " We shall cite a few lines only, for this spiritual testament is long. Each member of the noble patriarch's family is addressed in turn, while the wisest counsels mingle with the effusions of paternal affection. Like another Tobias giving his dying blessing, he concludes, saying to all :

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1—During many years, according to the testimony of the Hon. J. Viger of Montreal, this document was read annually, on the anniversary of the patriarch's death, in presence of the family.

"Love each other sincerely for the love of God. Remember that you will one day be called, like me, to appear before Him to render an account of your actions; hence do nothing of which you will later have to repent... I do not leave you great riches, but what property I have has been honestly acquired. I would willingly have left you more, but God is the master of all things. I leave you many friends, persons of rank, honor and probity; as to enemies I have none, to my knowledge.

"I have done what lay in my power to live without reproach: do the same. Seek to render service to every one: Be disobliging to no one, if you can oblige him without offending God.

"My dear children, ever keep before your eyes the fear of God and seek to love Him with your whole heart."

As to his wife, whom he recommends to the tenderest affection of his children, "his conscience reproaches him with nothing that regards her, unless it be that he has loved her too much; but if that has been an excess, he does not think God has been offended by it."

Finally, to his dearest daughter, our Ursuline, he says: "Do not grieve when you hear of my death; but pray for me and rejoice that God in calling me to Himself, has delivered me from the miseries of the present life. If you have loved me more than the rest, I also have had great affection for you and I shall have throughout eternity."

Then as a dying souvenir, he bequeaths to her a silver reliquary which he wears upon his bosom, in these words: "It is all that remains to me to give: it is but just that I bestow it upon one who has shown me so much affection."

These last words may strike some as remarkable. The venerable patriarch evidently does not share the opinion of



such persons as accuse a daughter who consecrates herself to God of being wanting in filial piety.

A long life of ninety-four years, accorded to our beloved Mother St. Pierre, seventy-two of which she passed in the cloister, would furnish many edifying details ; but a few lines will suffice to characterize her as the worthy daughter of the *grand-père Boucher de Boucherville*. According to the annals, " her only ambition was to render herself agreeable to her Divine Spouse by a strict observance of the rule and all the duties of the religious state ; her silence and recollection, her piety, obedience, humility and poverty, rendered her a model for her Sisters. Having abandoned the wealth and honors of her family to follow Jesus Christ, she attached herself inviolably to Him, seeking His sacramental presence on the altar and in holy Communion, as her chief and only delight. She served the community with equal fervor and to the satisfaction of all, whether employed in the highest or the lowest offices."

Should any one inquire here, what has become of the ancient domain of Pierre de Boucherville, we should direct him to an aristocratic little village on the south shore of the St. Lawrence, a short distance below Montreal. There are clustered the comfortable residences of the honorable descendants of the ex-governor of Three Rivers, the first seignior of Boucherville, their families still keeping up much of the urbanity, the courteous and dignified demeanor of the feudal lords of the age of Louis XIV. From the irregularly built hamlet, with its church, its presbytery, its convent, chapel and school-house, we behold in the distance Mount Boucherville, from the foot of which issue two small streams to spread fertility along their path, pausing at one point to turn the noisy but necessary grist-mill.

Throughout the whole length and breadth of the ancient governor's patrimony—an area of twenty-four square miles—appear pleasant country-seats, surrounded with gardens and orchards; white cottages, half buried in verdure; bright fields of wheat, oats and maize, alternating with patches of forest-trees, meadows and pasture-lands. In front of the village flow the bright waters of the St. Lawrence, losing themselves along the shore among verdant islands, as beautiful to behold as they are convenient for tilling and grazing purposes.

But why attempt to describe a spot which has many a rival along the pleasant banks of the St. Lawrence—scenes that Fancy herself

“ Would scarcely dream of: which one's eye must see,  
To know how beautiful this world can be.”

If we have dwelt with complacency, as it were, upon the memory of the seignior de Boucherville, it must be pardoned us, when we explain that besides his daughter Geneviève, three of his grand-daughters consecrated themselves to God in the monastery of the Ursulines, during the lifetime of their venerable ancestor. These were Mother Margaret de Varennes of the Presentation, Mother Marie-Anne de Boucherville of St. Ignatius, and Mother Charlotte de Mui of St. Helen, each of whom endeared herself to her contemporaries, and edified them by the example of an humble, pious and useful life. At a later period, our register shows the names of four great-grand-daughters of the patriarch of Boucherville, perpetuating in the convent the admirable traditions of ancestral piety.

## CHAPTER XVII

1741

## STATE OF THE COUNTRY

## ARRIVAL OF BISHOP DE PONTBRIAND

"The history of the Ursulines of Quebec, it has been remarked, is intimately connected with the history of Canada."

This fact which has already obliged us to depict other scenes than those of every day life in the cloister, invites us again, at this epoch, to cast a glance upon the state of the country at large. It will be a rapid survey, such as may have been made by the noble Frenchman who, in 1741, was entering the colony to make it his future home. It was natural that the newly consecrated Bishop, Henri-Marie Dubreuil de Pontbriand, should take a deep interest in every thing that regarded a country for which, like the Good Shepherd, he would lay down his life.

In the last days of August, the ship bearing the noble prelate was hailed from the citadel; and soon the glad tidings spread that a bishop was on board. For many years past, the widowed Church of Canada had looked in vain for the fulness of her authority, and consequently of her peace and strength, in the presence of her lawful head.

Count Henri de Pontbriand was worthy to be the successor of the illustrious de Laval and de St. Valier. In him, France was bestowing the last mitred pastor she would furnish to that colony, which religion more than her own policy had founded, guarded and fostered, and from which, in less than twenty years from our present date, her sceptre would pass away, almost without an effort on her part to retain it.

But the joy-bells tell not the secret of coming years, and neither prelate nor people foresaw the momentous events which the future held in store for them; events which would fill the cup of woe for many a smiling household, now only expectant of growing prosperity, and wring with anguish the paternal heart of the zealous pontiff during the last years of his generous labors for the good of his people.

At this moment, however, all was peace and security. The new Bishop, with a light heart at the happy termination of a long sea-voyage, sets foot on shore. The Marquis de Beauharnois, at the head of the principal government officers and the chief citizens of Quebec, has given the right hand of welcome to the noble prelate; complimentary addresses have been made; the capitulary vicars, de Miniac and Hazeur, surrounded by the clergy, have presented their homage and their congratulations. All has been cordiality, gratitude to Heaven, mutual good wishes and mutual delight. The Ursulines of Quebec shared the public rejoicings in no common degree. To their just appreciation of their pastor's merits on this first interview, they soon had occasion to add their gratitude for the many instances of his paternal interest in their welfare.

The Marquis de Beauharnois had governed the colony for the last fifteen years, and might well rejoice in the progress that had been made during his administration. All along the banks of the St. Lawrence, through more than a hundred parishes, he could point to thriving farms stocked with cattle, planted with fruit-trees, and yielding fine harvests of grain, vegetables, and all the products required for living comfortably. Within the snug cottage, the pleasant farm-house, and the seigniorial manor, the busy wheel and industrious loom gave employment to female hands, supplying the

household with clothing according to the season. Mines of copper and lead had been discovered along the lakes; the iron foundry of St. Maurice, near Three Rivers, had called the hidden metal from its ore, and now furnished implements of husbandry and cutlery for which the people had hitherto been dependent on France. The exports of Canada were no longer confined to peltry, but included the surplus products of the country, to which might be added the important resource of ship-building.

The good Bishop had reason to be equally satisfied with the religious aspect of his diocese, as far as Canada was concerned. Thirteen establishments of education or of charity published the zeal of his predecessors, and gave evidence of the spirit in which the colony has been founded. In Quebec, science and letters had long been cultivated at the college of the Jesuits and at the Seminary of Bishop Laval. Montreal had the fine Seminary of the Sulpicians, to diffuse the blessings of learning and piety among its three thousand inhabitants.

As to the extent of the diocese and the magnitude of the pastoral charge at that period, we must remember that not only the valley of the St. Lawrence and the regions of the North and the West, but the vast tracts watered by the Mississippi and its branches, were under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Bishop of Quebec. Nor was this charge merely nominal. The hardy discoverers who had traversed the wilderness to the Gulf of Mexico and the Rocky Mountains, had planted the Cross and raised beside it the flag of France, which now floated over forts or settlements all along these wide-stretching boundaries. At one extremity was the fine flourishing colony of Acadia; at the other, with an intervening distance of four thousand miles, were Mobile and New Orleans. Canada had a population of 40,000 inhabitants.

If the native tribes, first won to Christianity, had sensibly diminished in numbers, all the vast inland country was peopled with the savage red-men; and over these the pastoral solicitude of the Bishop would be exerted. The indefatigable missionaries continued their arduous labors, amid the innumerable obstacles presented by the roving life of our American aborigines. Sad to say, new impediments had been put to their conversion: new vices had been awakened in these poor children of the forests, by the conduct of those vagrant hunters, *les coureurs de bois*<sup>1</sup>, who, trafficking in fur and fire-water, might well be called the missionaries of evil. Their lives and practices fully exemplified a saying of our venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation, that "without the restraints of religion, a Frenchman would soon lay aside those of civilization and become worse than a savage."

Such then, in a few words, was the aspect of this vast country, confided for its spiritual wants to the care of Bishop de Pontbriand, in 1741; such had it become in the space of a century, counting from that feeble commencement, that weak infancy in which it appeared when our Venerable Mother, with her heroic companions, first set foot upon its soil.

The expiration of another century (1839) will present a still greater contrast; yet we shall see that through all its vicissitudes and through all its trials, from within or from without, Canada has thus far been "a country especially guarded by divine Providence<sup>2</sup>."

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1—Bush-rangers. This roving life has such attractions that laws had to be made to prevent the absence of so many young Frenchmen from the colony. No fewer than 800 were, at one time, thus absent without leave.

2—Words of Venerable Marie de l'Incarnation.

## CHAPTER XVIII

1752

## THE MUSES IN THE CLOISTER

Curious old manuscripts, after escaping during a century or more the annual perils of the season of house-cleaning, the Vandalism of epochs of demolition and reparation, sometimes suddenly come to light, and make us wish there had been some law to prevent the destruction of other similar documents, of little interest perhaps in themselves, yet precious as objects of curiosity, and useful in illustrating the past history of the Convent. Before us is one of those ancient scrolls, which appears of some importance. It is dated August 23rd, 1752, and introduces us to a little scene in the cloister, by which we may form some idea of what was expected of the pupils of the Ursulines in those days. We can only make a few extracts.

The occasion that brought the company together within the convent-halls is not specified. Whatever it may have been, we find there present, the Governor the Marquis Duquesne de Menneville, the Bishop of Quebec de Pontbriand, the Intendant; perhaps also the City Major, the Chevalier Lemoyne de Longueuil, with Mademoiselle Charlotte de Grey, now Madame de Longueuil, who was not accustomed to miss any opportunity of entering the Monastery.

The Superior, whose duty it was to receive these distinguished guests, was Mother Geneviève Boucher of St. Pierre, the venerable Mother being now in her eightieth year. By her side, as next in office, are Mother La Grange of St. Louis, Mother Drouard of St. Michael, Mother Migeon of the Nati-

vity, the late Superior ; Mother Wheelwright of the Infant Jesus and Mother de Muy of St. Helen were near, while with the pupils, directing their movements, might be seen some of the younger nuns, Mother Marchand of St. Etienne, Mother Davanne of St. Louis de Gonzague, and her companion, Mother Richard of St. Augustin.

If this was an examination, the list of prizes is unfortunately missing. Another list, however, enables us to re-people the hall with pupils. Let us transcribe a few names, for we are about to behold an Arcadian scene. Here are the Misses Madeleine and Catherine de Brouague, daughters of the Intendant of the Labrador coasts, the Misses de Léry, de Boisclair, de Gannes, de Lusignan, des Meloises, La Force, Gabrielle de la Jonquière, Ursule Baby, &c.

Here also are the grand-nieces of the venerable Superior, Miss Françoise de Boucherville and Miss Boucher de Grosbois, Miss Louise de Muy and others <sup>1</sup> ; but let these suffice, for our personages await.

Behold them, as, in the light costume of nymphs and shepherdesses, they issue from a verdant and flowery grove at the extremity of the hall.

The actresses having advanced in front of the illustrious guests, an ingenious prologue serves to rivet the attention of the audience. But listen to the youthful shepherdess, who

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<sup>1</sup>—Other pupils of that time : The Misses du Plessis, Le Duc, Couillard, Durocher, Rhodes, Berchelot, Le Mire, Girard, Beaudoin, Le Vasseur (Louisbourg), the Misses de Blainville, Varin, de Vincelot, de Chavigny, du Four, Poulin, LeBlanc, Hertei de Rouville, St. Hubert, Voyer, Aubert, Taschereau, Berment de la Martinière, Bédard, Baby, Roussel, de l'Isle, Philibert, de Lantagnac, Channazard, St. Germain, de Grey, Chauveau, the Misses Fleury d'Eschambault, the Misses de Verchères, Nicolet, Douville, &c.



compliments the Governor in a graceful idyl in which from time to time joins the whole group; a chorus fit to wake all the echoes, from the city of Champlain to the Laurentides.

Observe the opening :

SOLO.

Strike now a livelier chord,  
Awake a loftier strain;  
Behold ! 'tis a Duquesne.  
Welcome ! the noble Lord !  
If his brave sires of old  
To France preserved a throne,  
His sword—it is foretold—  
Shall here the same uphold;  
The glory all his own.

CHORUS.

Let his great name,  
O'er hill and plain,  
Resound in song,  
Sweet pipe and tabor bring;  
Let the glad echoes ring,  
Pouring triumphal notes along.  
From o'er the main  
He comes—Duquesne—  
To guard the land;  
First in true worth, first in command !

*2nd Shepherdess.*

Our vows were not in vain,  
A brighter day has come;  
Peace broods o'er every home,  
And plenty decks the plain.  
Our flocks secure may stray,  
In pastures fresh and green:  
Our foes, all in dismay,  
Flee from the light of day,  
When such a Chief is seen.

*3rd Shepherdess.*

Gay Shepherds, cease your song!  
To Orpheus yield the lyre.  
He has celestial fire,  
To him the notes belong.  
Let him in strains sublime,  
Exalt our Hero's fame,  
Spread it to every clime,  
Enduring as Old Time,  
And worthy of his name!

*(A translation from the original.)*

Evidently, mythological lore is in vogue in Quebec, in the 18th century. On this occasion the muse, it must be allowed, has not been sparing of incense. In addressing the Bishop, the tone is more filial, and while the admiration is not less, there is greater simplicity.

With united heart and voice  
We sing our gratitude;  
Our Pastor is of God's own choice,  
Beloved, as he is good!  
Unbounded is his sacred zeal,  
His flock his only care;  
No words his merit can reveal,  
Nor all our love declare.

Poems in honor of the worthy Bishop were recited on more than one occasion. During the course of that same year, the pious prelate, "whose zeal for the good of souls left him no repose, was five months absent from Quebec, giving retreats at Montreal for the religious communities and for the public, as he had done here before his departure. He penetrated some forty or fifty leagues beyond Montreal, traversing pathless deserts, through marshes and ravines, borne over frightful rapids in a bark canoe; undergoing hardships that can scarcely be imagined. His return was celebrated by our poets in varied measures."

The following version gives a part of one of these occasional odes :

## I

While peals of joy ring out to-day,  
And happy crowds obstruct the way,  
To bless our peaceful Convent-home,  
Our worthy Prelate deigns to come.  
My Lord, accept from children dear,  
A tribute humble yet sincere :  
To sing of sacred zeal like thine,  
The Muse herself should be divine.

## II

While thou wert absent all was dull,  
Flora herself no flowers would cull :  
The zephyrs fled our lonely bowers,  
And slowly waned the weary hours.  
One warbler sang—'twas Philomel—  
Repeating what we know so well :  
To sing of sacred zeal like thine,  
The Muse herself should be divine.

## III

Ah ! wonder not that all rejoice,  
And greet thee with exulting voice,  
Thrice honored Prelate, when 'tis known  
What glorious works thy hand has done.  
With admiration, all may see  
The land, renewed in piety.  
O yes ! to sing of zeal like thine,  
The Muse herself should be divine !

Our last specimen of the poetical effusions of the epoch records also a historical fact. It was in 1753. The Ursulines of Three Rivers had seen their convent destroyed by fire.

The worthy Frelate's generous devotedness on that occasion was appreciated, not only by the immediate objects of his benevolence, but also by the Ursulines of Quebec.

We are careful to preserve the mythological allusions in our version. The poem begins :

Among the gods, if poets' lays are true,  
Deeds most surprising were not rare to view ;  
And all Olympus did the feat admire,  
When bright Apollo cast aside his lyre,  
Forbore to sing, and seized the heavy spade,  
Or with the mason's trowel mortar laid.  
Like him, my Lord, you put the apron on,  
And soften hearts, while you are laying stone.

More than Apollo's, we your labors prize,  
While from their ruins sacred walls arise.  
What charity is yours ! what holy zeal !  
How generous to promote the public weal !  
God's glory is your aim ; and here we find  
A lesson for ourselves to take to mind.  
Our daily labors must to Heaven all tend :  
God and our neighbor's good, our only end.

Yes ! Heaven has blest your mission, all of love,  
And guards for you the brightest crown above.  
Long may it be our happy lot to know  
You have a rich reward, e'en here below.  
May all your flock be docile to your zeal,  
And follow in your footsteps, for their weal ;  
Nor ever from that way of life depart,  
Traced by a Pastor, after God's own heart !

## CHAPTER XIX

1755

## THE GUESTS OF THE URSULINES

If the woes of our friends become by sympathy our own, it must not be deemed foreign to our subject to introduce here a brief account of the destruction of the Hôtel-Dieu, in 1755.

It was only three years since a similar disaster had befallen the convent and hospital of the Ursulines of Three Rivers, as we have elsewhere related. Now it was the oldest of the charitable institutions in the country that was to be destroyed.

It was about mid-day on the 7th of June that a fire, which must have been creeping on unobserved for hours, suddenly declared itself by bursting through the roof. A strong wind from the north-west fan<sup>d</sup> the flames to a tremendous conflagration. In the space of a few hours, the convent, the church, the hospital and out-houses were swept away, with all the moveables, the comforts and resources which more than a hundred years had brought together, for the accommodation of the poor patients or the community.

It is needless to say how quickly the whole city, in alarm, was gathered to witness the heart-rending scene, and to deplore the impotency of human efforts to arrest the progress of the fiery torrent. The whole neighbourhood was in imminent danger.

The terror of the nuns, their exertions, their heroic courage, shared by their friends of every grade, while removing to a place of safety, decrepit old people, idiots, the sick, and the maimed; their laudable endeavors to save from the wreck whatever was most prized or most needful, all this may be

imagined. But alas! other scenes were witnessed there, upon which we would willingly forbid our imagination to dwell. In this hour of anguish, the nuns knew that one of their beloved Sisters was at the point of death. Must they disturb the tranquillity of her last moments, and hasten perhaps her end, by transporting the poor sufferer from her dying bed in the infirmary, into the crowded court-yard? There was no other alternative, even had there been time for deliberation.

Another, surrounded in her cell by the fire, seeks to descend from the fourth story; a ladder had been sent up to her aid, the vigorous arms of the soldiery holding it firm. Suddenly, while every one shudders to behold the peril, a bystander shouts to her that several steps are missing below her feet! How the good Angels were invoked! and how they aided the good Sister to preserve her presence of mind. Seizing the two side-pieces of the ladder, she supports herself by her hands till she again has a foot-hold, and thus, amid the cheers of the crowd, she reaches the ground, narrowly escaping however, being enveloped by the smoke and flames, now pouring from the lowest windows.

At last she is safe! But where is that other Sister, who has been seen a moment at a window, in the act of throwing out a parcel, and now has disappeared? In vain are the frantic shouts of those who would be her deliverers; in vain the search in every direction for some trace of the missing one; in vain the tears and lamentations of her Sisters when, assembled at last, they find their number incomplete. Sister Anne La Joue of the Sacred Heart had perished. But it was under the eye of Him to whom she had vowed her existence. Doubtless the Lord had inspired her to make the heroic sacrifice of her life, by a perfect resignation in that terrible

moment when she found herself wrapt as in a winding-sheet of flame.

Our Ursulines from their monastery could witness the conflagration. They had watched with pity and dismay the progress of the fire, and had sent the most pressing invitations to the *hospitalières* to take refuge under their roof. Messengers had already made known the melancholy details we have just given, and the sinking flames wore a sad and lurid glare, a funereal hue that told of death.

At last the dear nuns, now forty-nine in number, directed their mournful steps towards the centre of the town. Weeping friends and relatives attended them on their way, and crowds of people followed to testify their sympathy and their affliction. We shall not attempt to describe the meeting of the two communities, few of whom were strangers, while many were relatives or class-mates, or remembered each other either as former teachers or pupils.

Mother Mailloux of St. Andrew, the dying nun of whom we have spoken, was tenderly borne to the infirmary, and cared for according to her need. She lived till the Monday following, experiencing in her last moments the consolation of feeling herself passing secure from the embrace of sisterly charity to the bosom of the God of charity. The burial-service and the accustomed suffrages for the departed were performed by both communities, and the dear remains of the *hospitalière* deposited in the vault where the deceased Ursulines repose, "in order, says the annalist, that her ashes mingling with ours may serve to render enduring that union which has ever subsisted between us."

The generous hospitality which in former days (1651 and 1686) the Ursulines had received at the Hôtel-Dieu had not been forgotten, and they esteemed themselves happy in being able to afford a return; but not all the ingenious devices.

of friendship, not all the sympathy and affection with which they sought to cheer their guests, could induce these devoted nurses of the sick to forget their precious charge. A temporary hospital was provided by the paternal solicitude of Bishop de Pontbriand, the kind Jesuit Fathers having cheerfully offered for this end, several spacious apartments of their college. Thus, at the end of three weeks, on the 28th of June, the Ursulines and their guests bade each other a tender adieu. Mingled emotions sent their signals to the cheek and eye, as the spouses of Jesus separated, with the following words, betokening a last farewell: "**MAY WE MEET IN HEAVEN!**"

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## CHAPTER XX

1754-1758

### PRELUDES OF THE GREAT CRISIS

For nearly a half-century all has been in peace along the shores of the St. Lawrence. The last fifteen years, over which we have just glanced, have been as prolific of comfort in the happy homes of New France as the next decade will be of disaster, alarm and suffering. Troubles were now commencing along the distant frontier, and soldiers were wanted to guard the outposts of this great French domain, threatened by the Anglo-American colonies already strong enough to think of war and conquest.

Our Ursuline Mothers could not be indifferent, when the welfare of the country was interested. The ties of nature as well as of grace linked them with the whole population; and the tidings that sent grief or mourning to any hearth in



town or hamlet, ever found an echo in their hearts. The annalist of the time, Mother de Muy of St. Helen, has left us minute details of that long campaign, the Seven Years' War, from the first bloody conflict on the banks of the Monongahela, to the day when the British trumpet of war resounded from the cliffs of Cape Diamond.

From year to year the sufferings of the people were on the increase. Now it was the failure of crops, the absence of laborers having left the land untilled; now it was the loss of vessels, sailing from or to the colony. In the course of a few months—this was in 1758—more than three hundred French merchant-ships were captured by the British war-fleet with the loss of provisions, merchandise and military stores destined for Canada, where they were sorely needed. To these causes of distress was added the inclemency of the seasons.

Of the month of June, 1758, we read: "The cold is so extreme that we have to kindle fires as in winter. Nothing is growing. The flowers of the fruit-trees have been blighted by the frost, and what is worse, the wheat-fields have been frozen. There is every prospect that there will be no harvest. The hand of the Almighty weighs heavily upon this poor country. The English goad us on every side, and the Indians, won by their presents, threaten to abandon us.

"We have experienced, however, the goodness of divine Providence in our greatest need. The people had passed the winter on rations of four ounces of bread daily, and were on the point of being reduced to two ounces. No vegetables could be procured, and meat was excessively scarce. In short, starvation was staring us in the face, when, on the 27th of May, a French merchant-ship was descried in the distance. People were wild with joy. Some climbed to the roofs of their houses and mounted the chimney-tops, to assure them-

selves that the good news was true, and to announce it to the crowds in the streets. Greater still were the rejoicings, when others ships were seen coming in. At six o'clock in the evening, there were ten vessels, and a few days later, fourteen were anchored in the late vacant harbor.

"But the vessels have brought us sad news of the state of religion in Europe; and of the great efforts the English are making to take Canada."

A little later, the writer records the taking of Louisbourg. By the loss of that stronghold, the French colonists, still more isolated from France, were left without other resource than that energy inspired by the love of their country and their religion. It is not astonishing if Frenchmen and Catholics viewed with horror the possibility of falling under English rule. Catholicity was at that time, by the legislation of England, a crime. The penal laws were in full force. The deplorable fate of the Acadians was the most recent proof how ready the conqueror ever is to exclaim: "Woe to the vanquished!"

A whole people torn from their homes, separated from each other, forced on board ships, to be borne off and cast unprovided-for upon various inhospitable shores, for no other cause but their religion, was a terrible warning. Death seemed preferable to the misfortune of being conquered. So it was understood by the brave Montcalm and his brother-officers, who had resolved to bury themselves under the ruins of the colony, rather than to give it up to the enemy. So it was understood by the colonists at large throughout the country.

Meanwhile, the tide of misfortune that had set in against the French in America was ever growing stronger. The last gleam of hope seemed extinguished, when the intrepid envoy who had penetrated, as it were, through the enemy's

lines, in order to obtain the assistance of the French Monarch, returned only to announce that his petition was rejected. Henceforth the colony felt itself abandoned by the mother-country, and gathering courage from the greatness of the emergency, the population rose as one man to defend to the last their altars and their homes. The dreary winter of 1758-1759 was the fourth, during which the sufferings of famine had weighed upon the whole country. The nuns who record these facts state that they also were reduced to rations; they bewail the necessity that obliged them to present even to those who were sick, "bread as black as their robes." They mention that some poor Acadians, escaping the lot of their countrymen, had wandered through the woods and wilds till they reached Quebec, where their sorrows and sufferings added new terrors to the approach of the common foe.

The snows of wintry fields at last had melted, the ice-bound streams were free. Nature, refusing to assort her colors to the sombre hues of the political horizon, had clothed once more the earth in green, and decked the forests with budding leaves and fragrant blossoms. The great, glorious River, spreading out its broad expanse to the warm sun of early summer, seemed to ask news of the many welcome ships that were wont, at this season, to mirror their white sails on its bosom.

Suddenly, on the 26th of June, the British war-fleet stood in sight. It was a formidable array of armed vessels, including twenty-two ships of the line, forty frigates and transports, bearing 30,000 soldiers and seamen, flushed with the recent victories that had rendered them masters of the Gulf, and elated with the good fortune that had given them a prosperous voyage. Our annalist could not have known their strength, but her words were a prophecy when she exclaimed: "The country is lost!"

## CHAPTER XXI

1759

## DURING THE SIEGE

It had not required the electric wires to carry from one end of the country to the other the news that a formidable English fleet was on its way to attack the capital of Canada. The gigantic preparations for this final invasion were known, but instead of giving way to despondency, the entire population was animated with courage in proportion to the danger. A levy of militia included every male capable of bearing arms, between the ages of fifteen and sixty. Old men of seventy and boys of thirteen or fourteen, tendered their services and would not be refused. The citizens of Quebec, after sending their families to a place of safety, were needed to strengthen the garrison, and to man the batteries that commanded the harbor. All along the shores of the St. Lawrence, the defenceless population that remained in hamlet or village, the infirm and aged, the women and children, under the care of their priest and the civil officers, had orders to retire from their houses as the fleet approached, and to hide themselves with their effects in the woods at the base of the mountains, or in the wild forest of the southern plains.

The army under Montcalm, made up of five battalions of regulars, wasted and worn with hard service and poor fare, had been augmented by about 6,000 Canadiens, who had not suffered less from famine and hardships, but who felt themselves invincible in their ardor to defend their homes, their country and their religion. From their cloister, the Ursulines could see the disposition of the army, its centre at Beauport,

its wings extending from the bridge of boats on the St. Charles to the battery on the rugged cliffs of the Montmorency.

On the first of July the English fleet had reached the Island of Orleans, whence the inhabitants had just fled to the appointed place of concealment. The men-of-war lay at anchor, and the troops, disembarking, set foot on the soil they had been sent to conquer for the English crown. Cautiously they continued to sound their way as they entered the magnificent harbor, capable of containing four hundred vessels as proud as theirs. But they were not suffered to proceed. On every side the French were on the alert and the cannons of the garrison were not idle.

On the 12th of July, at nine in the evening, from batteries erected at Point Levy, the enemy began a heavy cannonade on the city. The Lower Town, at only a mile's distance from the opposite shore, had been deserted by its inhabitants who foresaw its coming fate. The red-hot balls and bomb-shells did their work of destruction, shattering many houses and setting them on fire. The Upper Town, which had not been so completely evacuated, proved to be within the range of the enemy's guns, and the greatest panic prevailed. Our Mothers, ever willing to hope for the best, had not abandoned the cloister. "But, says the annalist, at the first discharge from the English batteries, the convent was struck in many places. We passed the night before the Blessed Sacrament, in such terrors as may be imagined."

With the return of day-light, it was resolved to remove the community to a place of greater safety. It would have been temerity to remain longer within reach of the murderous projectiles which had wrought such havoc in a single night. The venerable Superior Mother Migeon of the Nativity, who had provided herself with a permission in case of such an

emergency, invited each one to make up her little parcel, such as she could carry, and to follow her, while there is a pause in the firing. But suddenly there is a little delay. No! the convent will not be totally abandoned. Ten of the Sisters, with the depositary, Mother Davanne of St. Louis de Gonzague at their head, have offered to remain. The chaplain, Father Resche, with two of his friends, have volunteered to be their guardians, and all are satisfied with the arrangement. Mother Superior gives her blessing to the little band as they sorrowfully bid each other adieu. Some among those who were going forth from their peaceful cloister were very aged, others were weak and sickly. Did any then foresee that, for two of those beloved Mothers, it was a last farewell, as they issued sorrowful and trembling from their convent-home?

They pass down the street through Palace-gate. They give no thought to the splendors of the Intendant Bigot's palace which they pass, nor to his iniquitous proceedings, of which they were probably uninformed: but hurry on by the nearest paths, across the meadows that intervene between the town and the General Hospital; for that is the asylum they are seeking, adding their numbers to the hundreds of defenceless wanderers already sheltered by those benevolent ladies.

The General Hospital had become a "city of refuge" for nearly 800 persons. The nuns of the Hôtel-Dieu were already there, and like the Ursulines, were prepared to take their share of the fatigues devolving upon the *hospitalières*. Every apartment was crowded. All the out-houses, the sheds and barns, were occupied; every garret and corner was filled with the wretched pallets of the poor refugees, their bundles of clothing, and whatever they valued or sought to preserve. It was among these sorrowing people, whose countenances betrayed anxiety and consternation, that

the good Bishop de Pontbriand, who had taken refuge at Charlesbourg, was seen every day, coming like an angel of consolation, to comfort, encourage and bless.

Later, as numbers of the wounded were brought in, the church also was transformed into a hospital. The only place that remained vacant was the nuns' choir, where the poor people crowded to assist daily at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. There, the three communities assembled to recite the Divine Office, the only respite they allowed themselves from their labors in assisting the poor and needy, or tending the sick. Thus passed the long summer; for long and tedious it seemed to those whose aching hearts were swayed by alternate hope and dread. Each day brought some new cause for mourning, or some new spectacle of woe. Fires, kindled by the red-hot projectiles, continued the work of devastation. At times it seemed as if the whole city was doomed to perish in one vast conflagration. If the garrison, within their stronghold and battling with the enemy, were safe, it was not thus with the few inhabitants who still ventured to walk the streets, or who persisted in remaining within their own dwellings. News of fatal accidents occurring almost daily, increased the anxiety of the absent nuns for their brave Sisters left at home. How often their eyes were turned to that dear spot! What anguish they endured as from time to time they discovered, or got tidings of some new devastation! One day the red-hot balls, falling upon a shed, set it on fire. All the out-houses of the convent were consumed, the flames rising high and threatening to extend to all the buildings around. Another time they witnessed the burning of the cathedral and all the dwelling-houses in its vicinity. A heart-rending thing for all was the devastation perpetrated along the shores of the St. Lawrence,

where houses and churches were wantonly set on fire and depredations of every kind committed.

We need not ask if the poor exiles often fled to the foot of the Tabernacle to find strength and hope, meekly accepting the bitter chalice from the hand of God, and saying with the patient man of old: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

At length, it was September. That month, so short in Canada, with its balmy atmosphere, its lustrous skies, its pleasant harvest scenes, had brought them the Feast of the Virgin's birth-day, and with it hopes of security. Evidently the English were tired of their useless efforts to gain any advantage over the French. The city was nearly destroyed, but it was not taken. They had once tried to attack Montcalm in his intrenchments on the Beauport plains, and it had been a failure. Would not the early autumn, so quickly followed by winter, force the enemy to withdraw their fleet? For several days the troops which had so long been idle, were moving in various directions along the shores, above and below Quebec; but they were watched, and all weak points were guarded. No one knew the daring project the intrepid Wolfe was meditating. It was a last resource; if it failed, the campaign was over.

Our readers know how every thing conspired to render the enterprise successful. The silence of the night told no tales of the stealthy march of 5,000 soldiers. The echoes of the cliff only brought the listening boatmen the necessary password. No rock of the shelving precipice gave way under the quick footsteps of the eager English soldier.

The first rays of the morning of that memorable 13th September fell on the glittering arms of an enemy, not yet within the gates, but on the heights which alone had rendered



the city impregnable. The Battle of the Plains had taken place before noon, crowding into the brief space of one hour events that have changed the destinies of New France, while History has kept her record, and taught the same lesson as Faith: "That all things work together for good to them that love God."

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## CHAPTER XXII

September, 1759

### SCENES AFTER THE BATTLE OF THE PLAINS

How fared the General Hospital, with its many inhabitants on the day of battle? How fared the three communities, on the morrow of that defeat of the French army which had been accomplished almost at their very doors?

The Hospital, from the hour of midnight, has been surrounded by a detachment of those same Scotch Highlanders, whose bright claymores glittered so terribly as they pursued down the hill-side Montcalm's routed forces. But their attitude now is not hostile. Their commander, Captain McDonell, has explained, in a brief interview with the three Superiors, the necessity he is under of investing the place in order to prevent a surprise. He has pledged his word that no harm shall befall the inmates of Notre Dame des Anges. He claims their benevolent services for the wounded of the English army, who are brought in indiscriminately with the French from the battle-field.

Alas! among the latter, the nuns often found their own near relatives, without being able to do more to soothe their dying hour than for the strangers committed to their charity.

The remnants of the French army, after turning many times upon their pursuers, had completely disappeared. Their tents were still standing along the plains of Beauport ; but their batteries and trenches were silent and solitary ; their guns, still pointed, were mute. Along the battle-field of the Plains, still reeking with gore and covered with the slain, the victors were opening the turf, to hide from view the hideous effects of war ; bearing off such of the poor victims as still survived, and hastening to intrench themselves, to secure their position so fortunately gained.

Around the citadel, groups of French officers are seen in consultation ; their gloomy countenances tell of indecision, weariness, and despondency. Within, a feeble garrison of seven or eight hundred men await the orders of their superior officers : the soldier's watch-word is obedience.

At nine o'clock in the evening of that 14th September, a funeral cortege, issuing from the castle, winds its way through the dark and obstructed streets to the little church of the Ursulines. With the heavy tread of the coffin-bearers, keep time the measured footsteps of the military escort, de Ramesay and the officers of the garrison following to their last resting-place the lifeless remains of their illustrious Commander-in-chief. No martial pomp was displayed around that humble bier ; but the hero who had afforded, at his dying hour, the sublime spectacle of a Christian, yielding up his soul to God in the most admirable sentiments of faith and resignation, was not laid in unconsecrated ground.

No burial rite could be more solemn than that hurried evening service, performed by torch-light under the dilapidated roof of a sacred asylum, where the soil had first been laid bare by one of the rude engines of war. The grave tones of the priests murmuring the *Libera me, Domine*, were re-

sponded to by the sighs and tears of consecrated virgins, henceforth the guardians of the precious deposit which, had not divine wisdom ordained otherwise, would have been reserved to honor some proud mausoleum.

With gloomy forebodings and bitter thoughts, de Ramesay and his companions in arms, withdrew in silence, nor ventured to

" Discharge one farewell shot  
O'er the tomb where a hero was buried ! "

A few citizens had gathered in, and among the rest, one led by the hand his little daughter <sup>1</sup> who, looking into the open grave, saw and remembered more than three fourths of a century later, the rough wooden box which was all the ruined city could afford to enclose the remains of her defender !

But while all is silent again around the convent of the Ursulines, let us transport ourselves in spirit to the hospital, where are assembled so many poor trembling women and children, homeless widows and orphans, helpless old men and sick or wounded soldiers. Stunned with the events of the last forty-eight hours, the final result of which is yet uncertain, all await in cruel suspense. Had the last hour of the French rule in Canada passed away? Had the colony exchanged masters with that brief struggle, the battle of the Plains? Would not the French troops rally and return, awakening again the death-telling roar of artillery, and exposing to the fatal stroke even that remnant of friends and relatives ?

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1—Mother Dubé of St. Ignatius, who died in 1839, at the age of eighty-eight.

But at this late evening hour, sleep and sorrow have closed the eyes of all, except those who suffer or who watch to alleviate sufferings. Of both classes there are not a few, and among them we find our dear Ursuline Mothers. One little dormitory is all that the most tender hospitality has been able to assign them, and to-night, it is transformed into a death-chamber for two of their number, two whose last hour has been hastened by the calamitous scenes through which they had just passed. Mother Jeryan of St. Joseph, rescued from captivity among the Indians and received forty years ago among the daughters of St. Ursula, will no more return to her beloved monastery; but exiled from her second home, she has departed to her happy eternal home in heaven.

The second victim, whose heart broke, it would seem, with the death-blow given to her country, was Mother Charlotte de Muy of St. Helen, the same whose hand has traced for us all the details of the war, up to the day when the nearer approach of the enemy gave her a presentiment of what would be the result of the impending crisis.

If the brave General whose deeds she recorded with such interest, rejoiced that he was permitted to die before Quebec would surrender, the humble spouse of Christ, herself the daughter of one who had governed a part of the colony, (Louisiana), resigned herself all the more readily to go forth from this world, that she might not see her country ruled by a foreign power.

The soldier has his grave under the roof of the monastery. The two Ursulines repose in a little garden-cemetery, beside the hospital where so many brave soldiers expired; their ashes mingle with those of the generous *hospitalières*, whose friendship was to our dear Mothers the sweetest solace of their exile.

A few days later, the city had capitulated. The victors enter, to behold the ruins they have made, and are forced to repair them, to find lodgings for themselves. The red cross of St. George is flying from the heights of Cape Diamond, instead of the lily-starred banner of St. Louis, when the Ursulines re-enter their cloister. It was on the 21st of September, after an absence of seventy days.

The spectacle which the convent presented has been graphically depicted in our Annals. "The building that serves for the extern school-house, in ruins; the sacristy, the chapel of the Saints, and the church, pierced by cannon-balls and bomb-shells; several cells in the dormitory much damaged; roofs broken in, chimneys demolished; the laundry, dilapidated by a shell which had burst through the floor of the community. "Yet, adds the writer moved by her gratitude, our losses would have been much greater had not eight of our dear Sisters been courageous enough to remain in the convent during the siege. Regardless of fatigue, and exposed to be wounded or killed by the falling projectiles, they were ever on the watch, and succeeded in saving most of the windows, the statues, the paintings, the two tabernacles and altar furniture, with other precious articles, which, had they not been removed, would have been damaged or destroyed."

As to the aspect of the city after a two month's siege, let our readers recall to mind the fact that the Ursuline Convent, the ruinous state of which they have just contemplated, was one of the edifices that had suffered the least. Six hundred houses were so riddled by shot and shell as to be uninhabitable, when they were not totally destroyed. The cathedral, the seminary, the Bishop's palace, the Intendant's, etc., were in ruins. The residences of the Jesuits, of the Recollets, and the Hôtel-Dieu, had suffered severely. In the Lower Town

but one house had escaped destruction, and blackened, crumbling walls were all that remained of that favorite church, *Notre-Dame des Victoires*.

It will not be without interest to subjoin here

THE COMMUNITY IN 1759: or the names and age of the nuns, who witnessed the events related in the last chapters.

Mothers Marie-Anne Migeon de Bransac of the Nativity,	
Superior.....	aged 74
Geneviève Boucher of St. Pierre, Assistant.....	83
Marie-Louise Gaillard of the Blessed Virgin, Zelatrix.....	62
Françoise de Hertel of St. Exupere.....	79
Geneviève de La Grange of St. Louis.....	65
Esther Wheelwright of the Infant Jesus.....	62
Marguerite Cloutier of St. Monica.....	59
Marie-Anne de Boucherville of St. Ignatius.....	63
Marie-Anne Buteau of St. Agnes.....	61
Marie-Charlotte de Muy of St. Helen <sup>1</sup> .....	65
Marie-Claire Gaillard of St. Thomas.....	57
Mary-Dorothy Jeryan of St. Joseph <sup>1</sup> .....	54
Madeleine-Geneviève Perthuis of St. Charles.....	58
Anne-Catherine Petit of St. Stanislaus.....	50
Jeanne-Claire Marchand of St. Etienne.....	40
Mother Marie-Marguerite Davanne of St. Louis de	
Gonzague.....	40
Marie-Elizabeth Richard of St. Augustine.....	38
Marie-Catherine Lagere of St. Gabriel.....	40
Marie-Antoinette Poulin of St. Francis.....	36
Geneviève de Lantagnac of St. Henry.....	36
Angélique de Lantagnac of St. Mary.....	29
Marie-Françoise Poulin of St. Anthony.....	26
Marie Cureux-de-St. Germain of St. Chrysostom.....	27
Marie-C. Lefebvre of Ste Geneviève.....	26
Marie-Joseph DesRoches of the Angels.....	36

<sup>1</sup>—Deceased at the General Hospital, Sept. 14th, 1759.

Louise-Françoise Soupiran of St. Ursula.....	25
Marie-Madeleine Cureux-de-St. Germain of St.	
Agatha.....	23
Charlotte Brassard of St. Clare.....	29
Angélique C. Parisé of St. John.....	24
Françoise Comparé of St. Francis-Xavier.....	22
Marie-Madeleine Massot of St. Francis of Paul.....	26
Marie-Anne Brassard of St. Magdalen.....	23

*Lay-Sisters.*

Sisters	Marguerite Gravel of St. Clement.....	Aged.	68
	Marie-Anne Racine of the Resurrection.....		59
	Marie-Julienne Maufis of St. Andrew.....		58
	Marie-Joseph Gagnon of St. Paul.....		56
	Marie-Joseph Patenôte of St. Francis.....		54
	Geneviève Mimaux of the Presentation.....		52
	Marie-Jeanne Bédard of St. Hyacinth.....		46
	Elizabeth Le Vasseur of St. Ambrose.....		43
	Rosalie Bedard of St. Francis Regis.....		37
	Angélique Toupin of St. Martha.....		39
	Elizabeth Bédard of St. Denys.....		34
	Angélique Déry of St. Thecla.....		26
	Louise-Gertrude Hamel of St. Anne.....		27

Total: forty-five.

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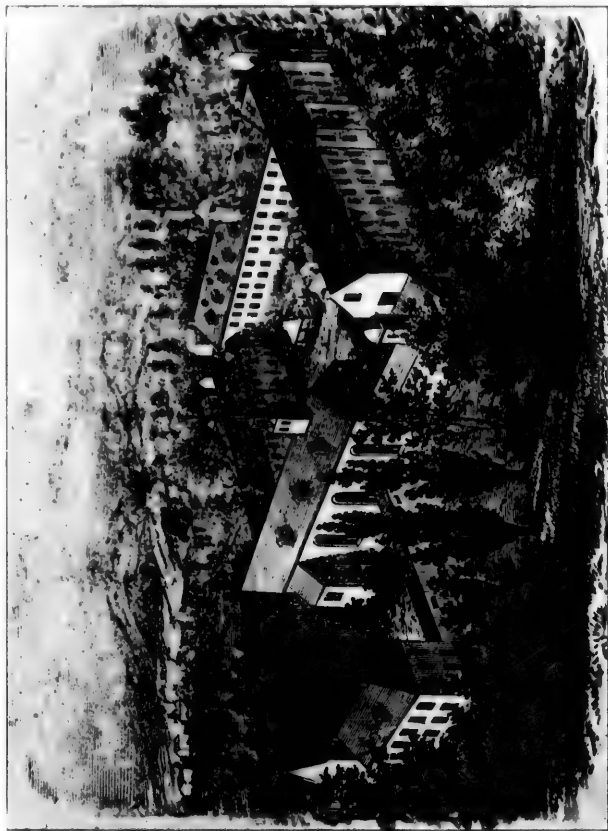
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34

26

27





**HISTORICAL CONVENT OF 1759.**

The church repaired by General Murray for the parish offices as well as for the Anglican rite.  
View from the garden.

# GLIMPSES OF THE MONASTERY

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## BOOK III

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### UNDER ENGLISH RULE—1759-1839

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#### CHAPTER I

1759-1763

#### FOUR YEARS OF ANXIETY AND SUFFERING

##### THE CONVENT BECOMES A HOSPITAL

In letters written after the return of our Mothers to their cloister, they style themselves—and with reason—"prisoners of war." They are uncertain what will be the fate of the convent or the country. Will they be obliged to go to France? Will not the English lose by treaty what they have gained by conquest? Or will not the French monarch, at last, come to succor his faithful subjects?

Our readers have seen what damages the convent had suffered. Besides these, the farm on the river St. Charles belonging to the nuns, had been ravaged, and their cattle driven off; the crops of wheat and hay, destroyed. They had no fuel for the coming winter; their stock of linen and other effects which they were accustomed to receive from France, was exhausted. They could expect no help from their friends

when the whole country was ruined. In this conjuncture, Providence raised up protectors for them whence they could least have expected.

General Murray entering the city as master, had promised that the religious communities should not be molested. He paid the Ursulines an early visit, and, from his first interview with the aged Superior, seems to have conceived for her the highest esteem. Assuring her of his special protection for the community, he manifested his wish to occupy a part of the Convent as a hospital, for the wounded or sick of the army.

The proposal was acceded to with a good grace, and immediately workmen were sent in to make the necessary repairs. Commencing by the church, the only one in the city that was not in ruins, they had it prepared for divine service by the 24th of September. Ten days later the sick soldiers were brought in, several apartments having been put in readiness. The venerable Superior cheerfully accepted the duties of her new position, and distributed her nuns through the various departments of the new hospital. Divine charity taught the nuns to banish every other feeling but compassion from their hearts and to wait upon these strangers, lately their enemies, as if they saw in each the Saviour himself.

In the mean time the cold season was advancing. The regiment of Highlanders, quartered upon the convent, had their share in the hard labors imposed upon all the soldiers in providing the city with fuel. Exposed by the peculiarities of their costume to suffer severely from the climate, they were objects of compassion to the good nuns, who set to work to provide substantial hose "to cover the limbs of the poor strangers." On the other hand, the convalescent officers and soldiers were eager to show their gratitude by rendering

every out-door service in their power, clearing the paths around the convent from snow, bringing, as far as they were allowed, burdens of every kind, wood and water, the daily provisions which were ordered from the commissariat, or from the baker's office. The prejudices they had previously entertained, and their opinions of a "nunnery" were soon modified by seeing the humility and real charity with which these religious accomplished the tasks necessity had imposed upon them. In Mother Migeon of the Nativity, the Superior, whose merits and qualifications fitted her for the trying situation, and in all the sisterhood, they beheld persons to whom they could not refuse the tribute of the highest esteem.

As to the religious exercises of the military during the first months of their occupation of the city, we learn from that echo of the past tradition, that the church of the Ursulines, where the Catholic population of the city assembled for the holy sacrifice of the Mass, was occupied at other times for the Anglican rite.

It is easy to conceive with what secret sorrow—if a stronger word would not better express the sentiment—our Mothers yielded up their "altars and their shrines," to those who professed no respect for either. Doubtless, at such hours, if forced to leave the choir vacant, not a few took refuge in the chapel of the Saints, to pray for those who honored not the Saints. Where the chaplain of the troops resided is not said; but the nuns' chaplain, Father Resche, had taken up his lodgings in the parlor during the siege<sup>1</sup>; and he continued

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1—The same room, the two parts opening by folding doors into one, is at the present day one of the apartments occupied by the chaplain of the Monastery.

to occupy that apartment during those difficult times in order to be at hand whenever his presence might be required.

If the winter was a long and painful one to the Ursulines, if some of the Sisters sank under fatigue, there were other causes of suffering besides the labors and inconveniences to which they were exposed. They knew well that the French army had not surrendered. The brave chevalier de Lévis had assembled at Montreal all the forces that remained, determined to make one more, desperate effort to save the country. Descending the river with the first appearance of spring, his intention was to drive the enemy from Quebec, before their returning vessels could find a passage through the ice in the gulf. On the 28th of April, he met the English troops for the second battle on the Plains. Alas, for good counsel on such occasions! could the all-wise decrees of Divine Providence have been read beforehand, how much blood, uselessly shed, might have been spared! But the people of Canada could not believe that their country, discovered, conquered and colonised by Frenchmen, could be given up by France: and while they fought

“ For their altars and their fires,  
God, and their native land,”

with heroic courage, they never expected to be left alone to cope with an enemy so powerful.

Three dreadful hours had covered the ground with the slain. Friend and foe lay in promiscuous heaps on that field of the dead. The English troops had been driven back in disorder. But of what avail was this partial advantage, or the destruction of lives and property during the following five days' siege? Already reinforcements for the English

army were at hand. The first spring vessels were descried sailing up the channel. If for a moment the intrepid de Lévis fancied that these were French men-of-war, hastening to his rescue, he was soon undeceived. The red cross of England was flying at the mast-head!

Frenchmen, Canadians! cease your desperate strife. Overwhelmed by numbers, you may desist without shame; for you have nobly defended a righteous cause. The fate of nations is in the hand of God, and later, when you know why He denied you victory, you will bless His apparent rigor and own that "He doth all things well!"

After that second siege of Quebec was over, our annalist writes: "It was then, more than ever, that our convent became a hospital; with difficulty we found means to retain lodgings for ourselves." Hour after hour the wounded English soldiers were brought in. The spectacle of mangled and mutilated limbs, of blood and gore, of acute suffering in all its varied forms, was an appalling one for Ursulines: but they had already seen what were the dismal effects of war, and had taken lessons in the dressing of wounds during the great siege. They found courage in their charity, and continued their compassionate cares as long as there was occasion for them.

Our annalist—no longer Mother de Muy of St. Helen—has been too sparing of details. We may form an idea of what has been omitted by a few lines written at the General Hospital, after the second battle of the Plains.

"How depict, says the *hospitalière*, the horrors we have had to see and hear, during the twenty-four hours that the transit hither lasted, the cries of the dying and the lamentations of those interested in their fate. A strength more than

human is necessary at such a time, to prevent those engaged in tending such sufferers from sinking under their task.

"After having dressed more than five hundred patients, placed on beds obtained from the king's magazines, there still remained others unprovided for. Our barns and sheds were full of the wounded. We had in our infirmaries seventy-two officers, of whom thirty-three died. The amputation of legs and arms was going on everywhere.

"The British had taken possession of the Hôtel-Dieu, the Ursuline Convent and private dwelling-houses, for the reception of their wounded who were even in greater number than ours."

Our annals mark summarily the death of several of the English soldiers within the Monastery. One of the halls for the sick had the reputation of being infected with some pestiferous malady, but this did not prevent the nuns from continuing their charitable attendance.

The community-hall had been assigned to the officers; beneath it, a similar apartment became the council-chamber, where General Murray, twice a week, assembled his military tribunal. The class-rooms, the pupils' refectory and other apartments, were transformed into sick-wards for the soldiers<sup>1</sup>.

In the mean time, the table of the nuns, as well as the wants of their guests, continued to be provided for by military orders.

On the 8th of September, the capitulation of Montreal, and the subsequent evacuation of the country by the French

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1.—The precise date of the departure of the military from the monastery is not registered: apparently, it was not sooner than the month of June (1760).

troops sent back to France, accompanied by a great number of persons of distinction, might well have extinguished the last ray of hope of ever being reunited to the mother-country. But not so easily fade the visions which the heart rather than the fancy pictures. France had not yet ratified the conquest; perhaps she never would, and meanwhile, the farmer repairing his ruined walls and hedges cultivates the land; the industrious mechanic, poorer than ever, pursues his daily toil, avoiding as far as possible, all contact with the strangers who occupy every post of honor or emolument, who are stationed at the gates of the city and at the door of every hall of justice, who monopolize whatever trade and commerce can be carried on; and who consider themselves, in all respects, and wish to be treated as the lords of the land.

Hostilities had at last ceased, and in the calm after so disastrous a storm, many of the dispersed families belonging to the city returned to seek their former habitations. In many cases they found only a heap of stones and rubbish to mark the site of their once happy homestead. Our Mothers, remembering the hospitality others had exercised towards them in the days of their exile, made room for several families who, during the winter, filled all the available apartments of the monastery and its dependencies. Among the number of persons who were thus sheltered, the annalist has noted that "there were several deaths of children and people of various ages; the ground near the extern-school served for their burial. The bodies were removed to the public cemetery only the following year."

While our Ursulines were thus exercising charity at the expense of great inconvenience to themselves, they did not forget their first and most cherished obligation: during the



course of the winter (1761-62) they began to take boarders, and to open a class of instruction for day-scholars. In the month of April, a certain number of children being found sufficiently prepared, the great act of the first Communion took place, under the direction of the indefatigable pastor, Mr. Recher.

On the same page we find another memorandum, which is a silent but eloquent comment upon the poverty of the convent. "In the month of June of this present year, we received in alms from Mr. Montgolfier<sup>1</sup>, Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice at Montreal, forty bushels of wheat, which has enabled us to sow our land on the river St. Charles. We have thus hopes of raising a little grain, since the war has not robbed us of our farm."

A little further on, we read of the loss of a vessel, on board of which were a number of Canadian families, going to France. "Only six persons were saved. This shipwreck has carried affliction and mourning into nearly every family in the country." This was the ill-fated *Augusta*, which, with one hundred and fourteen persons, among whom more than twenty officers of the French nobility and their families, perished on the rocky and inhospitable coast of Cape Breton.

If the arms of England were fully triumphant in the New World, if nearly all North America owned her sway, now that the French possessions had become hers, the Seven years' War had not yet come to a conclusion in Europe. This unsettled state of affairs beyond the Atlantic was

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<sup>1</sup>—Mr. Montgolfier was charged with the ecclesiastical affairs of the diocese, and was the presumptive candidate for the vacant See of Quebec.

watched with intense interest by the brave and loyal Canadian Frenchmen, who had been compelled to lay down their arms, but not their hopes! It was only with the news of the treaty that ratified the conquest, in 1763, that the final act of acceptance was made, and with it another more hearty act of thanksgiving, on being assured that the rights of religion would be respected. In Quebec, the public expression of gratitude "for the blessing of peace and the continuation of the Catholic religion" was ordained, and on the 24th of June a solemn *Te Deum* was chanted in the church of the Ursulines.

That the hope of a return to the French government was only given up at the last moment appears in all the correspondence of the period. Thus, after the treaty, one of our nuns, writing to our Parisian Ursulines, says: "I know how sincerely you have shared the afflictions that have weighed upon us for several years past. A treaty of peace so long desired, but concluded on terms so contrary to our hopes, has filled up the measure of our sorrows. We have felt the disappointment the more acutely, from having flattered ourselves so long that the final arrangements would be very different; for we could not persuade ourselves that Canada would be so easily given up. Nothing is left for us but to adore with submission the impenetrable decrees of the Almighty." The annals are more reserved in their comments: they write for posterity and prudently leave all things to be decided by experience. We find merely the following note. "On the 24th of May, 1763, a treaty of peace was signed between the kings of France and of England. Canada remains to the English. God grant that religion may ever continue to flourish!"

## CHAPTER II

1760-1775

## TRIALS AND CONSOLATIONS

## BISHOP BRIAND, THE BOARDING-SCHOOL RE-OPENED

One of the most afflicting dispensations of divine Providence, from a religious point of view, at this epoch, was the decease of Bishop de Pontbriand. This occurred at Montreal, on the 8th of June, 1760. Since the arrival of the eminent prelate in Canada (1741), he had proved himself in every way the good pastor, the friend and benefactor, the father of his people. After the events of the 13th September (1759) he had followed the French army to Montreal, continuing to sacrifice whatever remained of his patrimony for the relief of the poor. He likewise sacrificed his health in the discharge of his pastoral duties, in cares and solicitude of every kind, advising, exhorting and encouraging the defenders of Canada in a cause deemed identical with that of religion. Could he have ended more gloriously his career than by giving up his life with the last ray of hope for the triumph of that cause?

On the other hand, what a critical moment for the Church of Canada to be deprived of her pastor! The ranks of the clergy, already thinned by numerous deaths within the past six or seven years, required to be filled by new ordinations; but the consecrating hand was still and cold. Religious communities, so dependent on episcopal authority, shared the public anxiety and redoubled their prayers. It was not without good reason, for nothing was farther from the will of the new government than to give the deceased prelate a successor.

Our Ursulines had other trials within their own enclosure.

The community had been severely visited by mortality during that period of alarm and war we have just traversed. It is not without emotion we read of two good lay-sisters, whose death in the spring of 1760 is attributed to over-exertion during the winter in taking care of the sick soldiers.

There had been fifteen deaths and but nine professions from 1753 to 1763. The last novice admitted before the conquest had pronounced her vows in 1758. From that time the novitiate welcomed no other candidate, and finally remained vacant. Owing to the uncertainty of their own fate, prudence forbade the nuns to admit any new member to share the possible eventualities in store for themselves. On the other hand, amidst the difficulties which, with the English flag, had settled like an impenetrable and gloomy mist upon all the face of the country, what tender father and mother but would have gathered nearer their bosom and held in a closer embrace the beloved objects of their solicitude?

It was only in 1766 that the door of the novitiate was re-opened. It belonged certainly to St. Joseph the special protector of the convent to lead the way: accordingly it was on the eve of his feast, the 19th of March, that Miss Catherine Besançon, daughter of a respectable merchant of Quebec, received, after her three months' probation, the white veil with the name of that holy patron. She was soon joined by two other young ladies, Miss Marie Joseph Blais of the parish of St. Pierre, (Montmagny), and Miss Louise Taschereau, daughter of the Hon. Thomas Taschereau, member of the Supreme Council of Quebec, and Treasurer of the Marine office. Miss Taschereau, known in religion as Mother St. Francis Xavier, was destined to live long and useful years, as we shall have occasion to note.

If the losses and damages the convent had incurred during the war had reduced the nuns to great poverty, this was notably aggravated by other causes which affected the country at large. By the change of government in Canada, all the paper-money in circulation had become useless; while property owned in France was suddenly reduced to one fourth of its value, with a further discount upon the interest even of this fraction.

To add to the difficulty, all commerce with France was prohibited: yet what credit or facility for business-transactions could the Canadian merchant, if not already ruined, hope for in London? On the other hand, how many articles of the first necessity, especially for the church and altar, or for the apparel of persons living in religious houses, so long proscribed in England, were no longer to be found on the list of English manufactures?

Obliged by the state of penury to which they were reduced, to seek some means of subsistence, our Mothers had recourse in particular, to a delicate species of embroidery, commonly called bark work. This pretty and novel species of "painting with the needle," in which dyed moose-hair replaces the usual shades of silk, and the soft, leather-like outer bark of the white birch-tree is used instead of rich tissues of brocade or velvet, was much admired and sought for by English ladies and gentlemen, who had not come over to Canada with empty purses. At a later date, gilding for the decoration of churches, altars and tabernacles, is mentioned as bringing in a small profit whereby to avoid contracting debts, of which our Mothers appear to have ever had a just horror.

An event which served to revive the hopes of the people and rejoice all who had the true interests of the colony at heart, was the nomination of M. Jean Olivier Briand, Vicar

General, as Bishop of Quebec. This important concession in favor of the Catholic Church, although implied in the articles of the capitulation, had not been obtained from the royal will in England without difficulty and delay. The eminent prelate returning from France, where he had received the episcopal consecration, arrived in June, 1766, and was hailed with joy proportionate to the anxiety with which the religious population of Canada had watched the long deliberations that had retarded the fulfilment of their ardent wishes.

In the new Bishop, the community welcomed a former Superior, and a devoted friend; his new title and powers had only rendered him doubly paternal. The dilapidated cloister-walls, the extern school-house, and many other parts of the monastery, which the poverty of the nuns had not allowed them to repair since the siege, quickly drew the attention of the compassionate prelate. With as much delicacy as generosity, he no sooner discovered their wants than he took means to relieve them. Often the first intimation of the proposed repairs would be the sight of workmen, busy with their tools around the ruins. Like a good father, he loved to soothe and cheer his daughters in Christ; he delighted to appear at their pious festivals, celebrating pontifical Mass in their chapel, or presiding, crosier in hand, at the ceremonies of taking the veil or making profession. In a word, he availed himself of every opportunity for promoting the welfare, temporal and spiritual, of the community.

At the conclusion of Bishop Briand's first episcopal visit of the monastery, a duty of his charge, the annalist makes the following record.

" Our illustrious prelate has just concluded the visitation of our monastery, in which he proceeded with the greatest charity and to our entire satisfaction. His exhortation, at

the close, was so consoling and so full of encouragement, that our hearts were filled with new zeal for our own perfection and for the glory of God. Notwithstanding the poverty and miseries of every kind, occasioned by the war, our good Bishop found the community full of piety and as regular as ever. So he assured us, wishing us a thousand blessings, with the grace to preserve in this house to the end of time, the spirit of our first foundresses. God grant that it may be so ! ”

Another great consolation was reserved for the Ursulines, at this period, in the beatification of the foundress of the Order, St. Angela. The happy event was celebrated with as many outward demonstrations of joy as if the whole country had still been under Catholic rule. Nothing was wanting in the midst of the pious assembly but the *éclat* that would formerly have been added by the presence of a governor and his brilliant retinue. In place of this, the nuns record the joy and devotion with which crowds of people came to implore the protection of the newly crowned Servant of God, remarking that several persons of distinction, diseased or infirm, had themselves carried to our church, in order to manifest openly their confidence in her intercession.

But the consolation chiefly prized by these Ursulines, so worthy of their name, was the facility they had found in pursuing unmolested the principal duty of their vocation, the instruction of youth. We have seen already that no sooner had the monastery ceased to serve as a hospital than other occupants were found for the recent sick-wards. “ All the winter, says the annalist in the spring of 1761, we have had a certain number of boarders, and as many day-pupils as

we could accommodate." The lists of the former show thirty-seven boarders, among whom English names begin already to appear.

The number of new names inscribed during the following year would indicate about fifty pupils. The annals dispel all doubt on the subject by the following summary remarks in 1775.

"It has been a great consolation for us, in the midst of so many difficulties and trials, so see our classes always well filled, there being often as many as sixty boarders, French and English. The latter are naturally very gentle and docile, but it is sad not to be allowed to bring them up in our holy Faith. The day-pupils are numerous, and would be more so if we had more nuns to teach them."

To some of our readers, these lines, written with the usual brevity and candor of our convent-record, have been suggestive, and they would readily ask what is to be thought of the accusations so often heard against Catholic populations, their ignorance, want of enterprise, &c., &c.

Really, it does not appear as if the Canadiens of old, any more than those of present times, were indifferent to the value of education. The city has been made desolate by a cruel war, almost every house is in ruins, the fruit of many years of labor and economy are gone, for ever; commerce is annihilated, and every avenue to wealth or emolument obstructed; yet, hardly has the soldier returned to his ruined homestead and assembled the scattered members of his household, than he enquires who are those that have not been instructed for their first Communion, how many cannot read and write. He examines if these can possibly be spared from home, and straightway they are despatched to school.

Honor then to them to whom honor is due! Those French Canadians, we know, manifested more solicitude for the main-



tenance of their religion and the security of their religious institutions than for any mere temporal interest. Their attitude during all this trying crisis was such as to elicit the admiration and sympathy of the English governors themselves, when they were men of liberal views and of real merit.

In fact, it soon began to be apparent to the thoughtful observers of the times, that the conquest of Canada had been permitted by divine Providence for the greater safety and protection of its inhabitants. A letter written by Mother Marchand of St. Etienne as early as 1767, will serve to elucidate this point. It is addressed to the Ursulines of Paris as follows :

"The news we have had from France this year, as far as regards religion, grieves us profoundly. Although expatriated by the fate of war, our hearts are as French as ever, and this makes us doubly sensible to the decline of that dear country. I cannot help saying it is as well to be in Canada, where we enjoy the greatest tranquillity. We are not in the least molested on the score of religion. We have a governor who, by his moderation and benignity, is the delight of every one, and a bishop who is the joy and consolation of his flock. If money were not so scarce and every thing so dear, we should have nothing to desire." At a later date, Mother St. Louis de Gonzague writes : "Religion is perfectly free at present ; if any depart from their duty, it is their own fault. People say that it is not the same in Paris, where religious communities suffer persecution. We are told that you were even obliged to celebrate secretly the beatification of our Blessed Mother Angela. We have no such difficulty under the government of England."

## CHAPTER III

## MOTHER MIGEON OF THE NATIVITY

## AND OTHER SUPERIORS DURING TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

The services which Mother Migeon of the Nativity rendered her monastery were not merely of that deep and silent kind, accorded by the edifying life of every good religious. Placed at the head of the community in 1735, she became conspicuous for those qualities most desirable in a superior, and thus drew repeatedly upon herself, with the confidence and affection of her Sisters, the burden of authority. Twice only during a full quarter of a century (1735-1760), was this beloved Mother allowed a three years' respite from the cares of government: this was observing the constitutions to the letter.

Let us pause a while, dear reader, in the company of one who merited so large a share in the hearts of her contemporaries, and who challenges still the admiration and gratitude of the virgins of the cloister.

Born in Ville-Marie (Montreal) in 1685, Marie Anne was the youngest child of Jean Baptiste Migeon de Branzac, Lieutenant General of that city. Her mother, Catherine Gaucher de Belleville, was one of those truly Christian women whose example is a more powerful incentive to virtue for all who depend upon them than would be the most eloquent exhortations. At the approach of that great act of Christian life, the first Communion, Madame Migeon prepared to resign her tender charge into the hands of the Ursulines, and sent her daughter to Quebec, to continue an education commenced on so firm a basis in the parental mansion.

In our classes, Miss Migeon corresponded with alacrity to the care of her worthy teachers and completed successfully, in the space of a little less than four years, the course of studies then taught. Returning to the bosom of her family, the young lady, "in beauty's prime," richly endowed with those graces and accomplishments the world is sure to prize, soon had enough of its deceitful admiration to have disturbed a mind less poised by solid judgment and sincere piety. But "the figure of this world which passeth away," whose delusive light so strangely bewilders some young ladies, dazzled not the eyes of this faithful child of Mary: she was not led away by the siren voice of pleasure and fashion. Sweeter accents had already struck her ear, and obeying the call of Jesus, she sought again the shades of the cloister, ambitious only to please Him whom she had chosen as the object of her affections, and willing to spend her life in imparting to youth the benefits of a Christian education which she felt to be a treasure above all price.

On the 8th of September, 1722, at the age of seventeen, Miss Migeon de Branzac received the white veil at the hands of Messire Jean de la Colombière, Vicar General of the diocese, exchanging a name honorable in the world for that of a mystery in which the whole world may well rejoice, the Nativity of Mary. Two years later, she pronounced her final vows with angelic fervor.

One of the first offices confided to the pious Mother of the Nativity was that of mistress or directress of the boarders. So great a responsibility seemed overwhelming to our fervent novice, who felt alarmed in proportion to the humble opinion she had of her own abilities. Her eagerness to obtain the aid of Heaven and her self-diffidence led her to solicit the prayers and advice of M. de la Colombière. His reply, which she ever carefully preserved, we here subjoin, as

embodying the duties of an Ursuline of the present day, as well as it did of those who lived one hundred and fifty years ago.

"Your new employment, my dear Sister, demands patience and an ever ardent desire of promoting the salvation of souls. It affords you frequent opportunities of impressing upon the minds of your youthful charge the nature of the obligations they have contracted in baptism, and of inspiring them with contempt for the pomps and vanities of the world. In a word, all the young girls under your care should strive to become by their piety, the living images of the most holy Virgin Mary; they should be actuated by a noble emulation to acquire the virtues of the Queen of Angels.

Adieu. Love the Blessed Virgin, and lay deep in your own heart the foundation of every virtue, as you are aware you must aim at perfection, in order to merit the glory and happiness of being ranked forever among the true children of Mary.

Ever yours, &c.,

JOS. DE LA COLOMBIÈRE."

The office of directress was a light one however, in comparison to that of superior, which awaited Mother Mary of the Nativity for the first time in 1735. Called repeatedly, as we have already said, to this post of responsibility, she had celebrated her fiftieth year of religious profession, when came the trials and sufferings of that memorable year of the great siege (1759-1760). Yet how calm, how full of energy, how strong by her trust in divine Providence, how capable of counselling, directing, and encouraging, appears this venerable Mother! How attractive her humility and benevolence! What delicate propriety marked all her demeanor! That nameless charm with which the life-long practice of virtue invests its possessor, was heightened, no doubt, by the vivacity and wit peculiar to her nation and set off by the polish due to intercourse with the best society. To all these

causes, but above all to the merciful designs of Providence, must be attributed the influence she exerted over strangers and Englishmen, she, a Frenchwoman, who not only professed that religion hated and proscribed by their nation, but who was at the head of an establishment, the very name of which would, at that day, have raised a cry of horror in England.

So remarkable was her success in this trying crisis, in conciliating the good will of the officers of His British Majesty, yet preserving the rights and property of the convent, that the Bishop thought himself justified in authorizing an exception to the rules, an exception unique in our annals. This was to prolong the term of her government beyond the appointed time for the elections, in order to avoid any change while as yet so many interests were at stake. To this measure there was found, it seems, one dissenting voice; but it only served to justify the nomination, for it was that of the humble and venerable Superior herself, trembling for the consequences of one deviation from the regular discipline of the convent.

At the age of four-score years and more, Mother Mary of the Nativity was still a pillar of regular observance; her pen was still as fluent, if not as elegant, as it had been thirty years previous; her intellect was as vigorous, and her piety even more simple and beautiful. It was only at the age of eighty-five that her strength began to fail her to such a degree that she became, for the last eighteen months of her life, quite infirm and helpless. Yet, even to the last, the bright spirit flagged not. The lamp, borne in the wise virgin's hands, was well replenished and burned brightly, giving out vivid rays of faith, confidence, love and desire, at the welcome approach of the Bridegroom. Pure had been the dawn, and sweet was the close of that long and useful life.

Mother La Grange of St. Louis governed the community from 1741 to 1744. She died in 1776, at the age of eighty-three, having borne "the sweet yoke of the Lord" from the tender age of fifteen. On comparing dates, we are reminded that Mother St. Louis and Mother Mary of the Nativity were pupils of Mothers Charlotte Barré of St. Ignatius, Mother Bourdon of St. Joseph and St. Agnes, and had lived many years with those saintly souls, formed to the practice of perfection by Venerable Mother Marie de l'Incarnation.

Mother St. Louis is depicted as "gentle and kind, amiable in conversation, active and laborious, ready to oblige and render service, ingenious in finding time to aid the others, without neglecting the duties of her own office." Her biographer tells us of her fervor, her regularity, her confidence in divine Providence, enumerating the services she rendered the community, and closes her tribute of affection in those words: "The memory of this venerable Mother will ever be most dear to us."

We end this Chapter with the name of Mother Boucher de St. Pierre. Judging by the advanced age of several of the Superiors of the convent when first elected, or the late period at which they are continued in office, one may easily infer the great consideration the elders enjoy in the Monastery. In the present instance, we find that Mother St. Pierre, after occupying the second or the third rank, a full quarter of a century, is called to the superiority at the age of seventy-four. Our readers have seen elsewhere that this worthy religious has not been forgotten in the annals of the monastery.

## CHAPTER IV

1775-1785

## THE CONVENT DURING THE SIEGE OF 1775

## DIFFICULTIES OF SUBSEQUENT YEARS

Again, dear reader, the clarion of war has sounded ; again the rocky heights of Cape Diamond echo to the shrill call of military horn and bugle. Not even the ice-bound river and the snow-buried plain have secured the country from an invasion, in the name of liberty ! But is the peaceful cloister again to be disturbed, its inmates scattered, its walls ruined ? We have just perused the narrative Mother St. Etienne has left of this American invasion of 1775, the fourth siege the Convent has witnessed <sup>1</sup>.

Our readers would find nothing new to them in the details she gives of that daring attack upon Quebec, except what regards the convent, and to this we shall mainly confine ourselves. It would be needless to follow the vicissitudes of that campaign, begun with the mistaken idea that Canada would willingly join the American colonies in their attempt to throw off the British yoke. History has traced the march of the invading army, which under Montgomery bore off the British colors from every fort and town in its path, St. John's, Chambly, Sorel, Montreal, Three Rivers, till joining that other hardy band issuing from the woods on the banks of the river Chaudière, they hasten on, cheering loudly as they pause before the gates of Quebec, expecting to see them thrown open to its deliverers ! The issue of that

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1—The preceding sieges were those of 1690, 1759 and 1760.

midnight strife of December, 1775, was written in bloody characters upon the banks of freshly fallen snow, with the fate of the gallant but unfortunate Montgomery.

The memory of all this was revived in 1875, by a commemorative centennial. We need not dwell upon the winter's blockade, the arrival in March of an English fleet, bringing timely succor to the weary garrison, the final evacuation of Canada by the American forces. We are certain to gratify our readers more by opening to their view the interior of the cloister during that six months' siege.

We shall not find therein a flock of young and timid doves, to be frightened by the first discharge of artillery. No! many of these thirty-four professed nuns had been through scenes that had given them courage and experience. They remembered the two sieges of 1759 and 1760, and trusted themselves all the more serenely to the protecting care of divine Providence. Beyond the walls, along the suburbs of St. Roch, and in the Intendant's palace, in full view of the convent, there were some hundreds of armed men, raising batteries and pointing cannon upon the town. When these preparations had been completed the murderous projectiles were scattered like hail-stones all around the premises, but the inmates did not appear unused to the smoke and din of war. One of the nuns, as she was passing through an apartment, had a piece of her apron carried away by a cannon-ball. It is not related that she even kept the fragment as a souvenir! <sup>1</sup>

Let us hear Mother St. Louis de Gonzague, giving a summary account of the winter to the Ursulines of Paris :

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1—It is not uncommon to meet with cannon-balls and bomb-shells on the convent-grounds. A few years ago, in repairing the roof of the *Sainte-Famille* wing (the northern part of the monastery occupied by the community,) a cannon-ball was found still lodged



"We would be most ungrateful, says she, if we did not bless a thousand times the Author of all good, who supports and consoles His servants in the midst of the different trials of this life. Your fervent prayers, my dear Mothers, obtained for us new courage, which transformed us all into heroines. You are aware we have passed through a six months' siege. I leave you to imagine the feelings of poor nuns in such circumstances, with the fire of the combat constantly before their eyes, and threatened at every moment by the bombs and cannon-balls. The first ball that reached us struck the infirmary; another entered the novitiate, breaking the windows and a novice's bed. We hastened to take out the window-sashes, and this being perceived by the enemy, they lowered their guns. Evidently, they did not intend to harm us.

"A little later, a ball passed through the church-windows and struck a neighboring house. The Almighty protected us, taking pity on poor nuns who have no other part in war but to suffer its inevitable penalties. However courageous we may have felt, it must be owned that the situation was not an agreeable one. To live amid constant alarms, to hear the hour of battle announced by the tocsin the bells ringing only on these occasions—to be stunned, night and day, by the rolling of drums and the booming of cannon, to have no place of safety in case of danger, our only vault (which served as a chapel) being damaged and insecure: all this was not pleasant.

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between the roof and the wall. A bomb was lately found beneath the choir buried in the earth. It had not exploded, and was still full of the materials with which it had been sent on its errand of destruction, whether by the English or by the Americans, we cannot say.

" On the 15th December we had our elections, in military style, to the sound of guns and cannon !

" Our observances were followed regularly in chapel, in spite of the rigors of the season. All these inconveniences have not sufficed to injure the health of any one of us seriously, which certainly seems wonderful. It is true we had the advantage of being all together, at home, without anxiety for our subsistence, our prudent *Dépositaire* having laid in a good store of provisions, which was no small relief and aid in supporting the miseries entailed by war."

Oh ! we may well say : " There's no place like home," since the casualties of war itself can be affronted with intrepidity by the aid of mutual sympathy and charity !

After an interval of ten years (1785), if we enquire, how fares the Convent ? we find the nuns yet struggling with poverty, sharing the difficulties that on all sides weighed heavily on the country. Governor Haldimand was not the man to bring order and good feeling out of confusion and dissatisfaction. To the misery caused by the want of public confidence, scarcity of money and high rates for merchandise of every kind, were added other calamities ; bad seasons, poor crops, shipwrecks, and accidents. Even the moral atmosphere was dark and lowering. Witness the following extract from a letter written in 1785 to the Ursulines of Paris :

" We have reason to weep in the sight of Heaven over our poor country. There is liberty, it is true, to profess our holy religion, but there is little care for living piously or fulfilling the duties of a Christian. Young girls are not brought up as carefully as they were formerly. Some of our

pupils, soon after their first Communion, are taken from us, and before the age of fourteen they are introduced into society and allowed to go to the theatre. You may easily imagine the sad results of those dangerous amusements. If I enter into these details, it is to engage you to offer your fervent prayers for us and for our poor people." In another letter, she writes: "We hear many complaints of the vanity and luxury which are becoming prevalent in society; yet there are many good people who persevere faithfully in the path of duty."

A difficulty which from year to year embarrassed the Ursulines as well as every other institution for education, was that of procuring French books for the pupils. All direct communications with France had ceased, and printing was yet on a small scale in Canada. One French bookseller in Paris was known, who had a correspondent in London. Through him, from time to time, the educational establishments here could renew their class-books, but the limited importation was subject to many inconveniences.

The decline of piety, the difficulties of various kinds already enumerated and others too long to be detailed here, had the effect of diminishing the number of boarders towards the close of the century. The course of studies became more and more elementary, and for a great many only extended to the period of their first Communion.

On the other hand, more and more alarming were the reports that came from Europe of the growth of infidelity, irreligion and crime, especially in France, that France which, to our nuns, was still the beloved mother-country. Already the suppression of the Jesuits (1773), and that of other religious orders in subsequent years, afforded but too evident proof of the profound depravity of those men who had placed themselves at the head of the revolutionary movement.

Alas, for that ill-fated country! there were days in store for her people, darker than those which in 1785<sup>1</sup> terrified the comparatively innocent population of Canada, and of which we are forcibly reminded, as we revert to that period of moral darkness, "the reign of Terror."

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## CHAPTER V

1760-1793

MOTHER ESTHER WHEELWRIGHT, AND OTHER SUPERIORS

AMICABLE RELATIONS WITH THE ENGLISH GOVERNORS

In 1761 the convent elections placed at the helm Mother Esther Wheelwright of the Infant Jesus.

A Superior bearing an English name, appearing for the first time in the community just as English rule is being inaugurated in Canada, seems a strange coincidence. This child of providence, whom the reader has recognized as the *Indian captive*, had never been forgotten in the home of her infancy. If the difficulty of communication between the city of Boston and Quebec at that time prevented the bereaved parents from satisfying their affection by coming to see their

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1—On Sunday the 9th October, 1785, after a night rendered fearful by gusts of wind, claps of thunder and torrents of rain, the morning was foggy. At about ten o'clock an easterly wind arose, when it suddenly became as dark as night for some minutes. This was followed by a thunder-storm and again by midnight darkness, thus alternating all the afternoon. People dined by candle-light. Our nuns sang their Vespers with lights, as they are wont to recite the evening office. In the different churches of the city, divine Service had to be suspended.

daughter, they lost no opportunity of reminding her by letters and by presents of their tender remembrance. Among these souvenirs, none surely was so precious as the miniature portrait of her beloved Mother which is still preserved in the convent.<sup>1</sup>

Nearly fifty years had separated Mother Wheelwright of the Infant Jesus from her family, when a nephew of hers, having performed the long journey expressly to see his aunt, was admitted to visit her within the cloister. On taking leave of his newly-found relative, Major Wheelwright, regardless of her objections on the score of her vow of poverty, placed in her hands a silver fork, spoon and goblet, in the name of her family.

A few months after our amiable Mother's re-election in 1764, occurred the golden jubilee of her religious profession, our church being at that time still open to the public for the parish offices. According to the annalist, nothing was wanting to enhance the solemnity of the fête: the organ, played by the chaplain, Father Resche, good and devout singing by the best voices in the community, an eloquent sermon on the happiness of the religious life. The morning ceremony concluded with the *Te Deum*, and that of the afternoon with

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1—In 1761, the year following her election as Superior, one of her sister's sons, Joshua Moody, son of Mary Wheelwright Moody, visited her. "One of this sister's grand-daughters was named Esther Wheelwright, and to her name-sake the Lady Superior sent many presents, requesting that she might be entrusted to her care to be educated in the Convent. Of course, the Puritan parents were not disposed to gratify her in this respect. Among other things, she sent by Mr. Moody her own portrait, painted in the dress of her order. This is still in the family, having been handed down with the name of Esther from generation to generation." Miss C. A. Baker, from whose *True Stories of New England Captives* the above has been copied, adds: "For this information I am indebted to Mr. Edmund Wheelwright of Boston, who is about to publish a history of his family. Cambridge, Mass., 1897."

the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. These details show that the usual pious rejoicings on such occasions were not interrupted by the presence in the country of a hostile creed. The "Hind and Panther" were not growling at each other, openly at least.

Let the old manuscript we love to refer to tell what opinion the companions of Mother Esther of the Infant Jesus had formed of her virtues as a religious. Oh! they are eloquent in the praising of that "soul predestined from all eternity, the beloved of God and man, whose admirable examples during her long career of sixty-eight years spent in the service of her Divine Master in this community, have a more touching language than all that could be written.

"Endowed with the happiest of dispositions and an excellent constitution, to what a holy use did she not apply these precious gifts, walking firmly in the path of perfection, strictly observing the minutest points of the rule, placing in this, as she said herself, her joy and consolation. Every thing that tended to the glory of God inflamed her zeal. What pains did she not take in instructing young girls, during the many years she was employed in the teaching department of the institute! If her extreme gentleness, her grace, her exquisite politeness, rendered it difficult for her to take upon herself that tone of authority which is sometimes necessary, she always succeeded in gaining the esteem, respect and affection of the pupils. Her qualifications admirably fitted her for the offices to which she was called in the interior of the monastery, as superior, assistant and mistress of novices. Laborious at all times, it was particularly during the years of penury and distress for the convent that this beloved Mother exerted her skill in embroidery and fancy work, in order to contribute to the support of the community. When her sight had become too feeble to permit her to execute the more delicate labors

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of the needle, she solicited and obtained leave to do the mending of the house, displaying in this as much neatness, economy and amiability as if these articles also were destined to be admired and purchased. Yet this is not surprising, for a soul like hers must have been animated by purity of intention and an interior spirit in all her actions."

If St. Bernard hesitates not to ascribe the merit of martyrdom to the religious life, persevered in to the end with fervor, what must not be the recompense of this privileged soul, who sacrificing home and country, devoted herself unreservedly to the service of her Divine Master, only laying down the cross with her life, at the age of eighty-four years? "It was on the 20th of October, 1780, amid her usual pious aspirations towards Heaven, that our beloved Mother Wheelwright of the Infant Jesus ceased to live in this world, to live for ever with the blessed in heaven, leaving us the legacy of her virtuous example, and a memory that will be ever fresh in our grateful hearts. Her ancestors were noble, as the arms of her family bear witness, but she needed not the illustration of birth or title, to win from all who knew her a willing tribute of love and admiration."

With the name of Mother Esther of the Infant Jesus, we naturally associate that of Mother Davanne of St. Louis de Gonzague, these two remarkable superiors having filled the office alternately during eighteen years (1760-1778), continuing the amicable relations with the new government, commenced so auspiciously under Mother Migeon of the Nativity<sup>1</sup>.

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1—It may not be uninteresting to insert here a little note written by Governor Murray to the community, after his return to England. It shows that if the English General knew how to recognize the services rendered to the sick and wounded of his army like a

We here find ourselves in presence of a Parisian lady, and at the same time we are reminded of a domestic drama stranger than fiction, for which we must refer our readers to a future page. The present must be confined to what regards Mother St. Louis de Gonzague as Superior, recalling some further instances of the kind feeling with which the Ursulines were regarded by Governor Carleton later, Lord Dorchester—and by all his honorable family, as well as by the other officers of His British Majesty in Quebec.

It is well known that Sir Guy Carleton was a sincere and constant friend of the Canadians. Our annalist writing of him at the time says, “ he is justly beloved by all classes of people. His mild and paternal administration, his prudence and benevolence, his personal merits and kindness, have ren-

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gentleman and a soldier, he could also acknowledge, as delicately as a lady, a slighter favor.

*London, April 23rd, 1767.*

LADIES,

I have received the beautiful articles you had the kindness to send me. They are certainly most acceptable in themselves, being the work of skilful and tasteful hands; but these gifts are especially precious to me on account of the feeling that has dictated the offering. It is your esteem and attachment which I consider, and which I value as I ought. But this new proof of your sentiments in my regard was not necessary to convince me that they were unalterable. During my sojourn in Canada, I had a thousand occasions of appreciating those kind feelings; I am most sensible to the honor and it will ever be a pleasure to me to acknowledge the obligation.

I am persuaded you will continue to enjoy the tranquillity and happiness you merit: it is the recompense due to your virtues, and the fruit of your irreproachable life. It is these considerations that have won for you, Ladies, the esteem and confidence of all who know you. Continue to enjoy it. For my part, nothing would give me greater pleasure than to have an opportunity to prove the high consideration and attachment with which I have the honor to remain

Yours &c.,

MURRAY.



dered him dear to all ranks. Long may it please the king to continue him in office!" adds she with emphasis.

The relations of Lady Carleton with the inmates of the cloister were most intimate and cordial.

It was through her influence, and at the request of Governor Carleton, that the nuns consented to admit as parlor-boarder, a relative of the family, Mrs. Johnston, while her husband was absent in London.<sup>1</sup> The same favor which at the present day is refused to more than one applicant, was again granted later, (1778) to the widow of Major Carleton, Lady Anne. This lady, whose fine qualities and rare amiability endeared her much to the nuns, became so attached to them and to her secluded way of living under the convent-roof, that she would willingly have arranged to make her situation a permanent one. Unable to obtain this favor she finally decided to rejoin her family in London, leaving her quiet apartment with as much regret as the nuns themselves felt to part with her.

Lady Carleton was, at all times, most gracious and obliging, bringing her little family to see the nuns, visiting them first on her arrival and last on leaving the country each time that she had to cross the ocean. On one of these parting occasions, accompanied by her suite, and by her "three little sons, and also her little daughter whom we had not yet seen," she presented the Mother Superior with two silver candlesticks for the church. The nuns rightly said that a Catholic could not have been more thoughtful and delicate in the choice of a parting souvenir.

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1—Mrs. Johnston, as well as Lady Carleton, occupied the apartment that has since become the chaplain's room. It was then, as now, beyond the limits of the strict cloister.

Praising the Governor's wise administration, and wishing that his successor may follow in his footsteps, our annalist adds: "He has governed the country with admirable prudence, and given proof of greatness of soul in many critical moments. He has labored indefatigably to promote the welfare and best interests of the people, treating the Bishop and clergy with deference and esteem, and suffering no one to be molested on account of his religion."

Then with what hearty expressions the same pen records in 1786 the "return of my Lord Dorchester, our late Governor, to the great joy of the clergy as well as of the people. He was hailed by a salute of artillery and received by the troops under arms. My Lady, after suffering much from the sea-voyage, has arrived in good health with all her family." On her first visit to her cloistered friends, Lady Dorchester signified her desire that her daughter should take lessons in French and in embroidery from the nuns. Accordingly, with the authorization of Bishop Briand, the young Countess was admitted daily for the space of two or three hours, her mother accompanying her in order to perfect herself in the French language, and to enjoy the amiable company of the French teacher, Mother Davanne of St. Louis de Gonzague.

At all times, a visit to the Ursulines seems to have been a part of the programme of the governor's reception in Quebec.

Returning now to our theme after this long digression, we meet a new Superior in the person of Mother Antoinette Poulin of St. Francis. Like Mother La Grange of St. Louis, it was chiefly as *dépositaire*, during long years of penury and difficulties of every kind, that Mother St. Francis has acquired a right to the perpetual gratitude of her community.

Much of her voluminous correspondence with the Ursulines of France having been preserved, we are enabled to enter into an intimate acquaintance with the amiable Mother, who from 1760 to 1787 was the visible providence of the Monastery. The clearness and precision of her style, the elevation of her sentiments, the sensibility of her heart, in turn excite our admiration, revealing her character precisely as her biographer has traced it. We readily understand that "this dear Mother was moved with a tender compassion for the afflicted, being charitable and kind to all. During the twenty-one years that she was in charge of our temporal affairs, in times of the greatest difficulty, her economy and foresight were admirable; but her goodness of heart was still greater, and of this we were so well persuaded that it served to moderate the sufferings of that memorable period. She was one of the eight courageous Sisters who remained during the Siege to watch over the Monastery. She loved the pupils tenderly, and manifested her affection on every occasion, not only when employed with them in teaching, but in every office that had the least relation with that duty, the dearest and most important for an Ursuline." At the age of sixty-five, having filled the measure of her days and of her merits, Mother St. Francis passed to a better life (1790).

Mother Brassard of St. Clare held the office of Superior from 1787 to 1793. In her we recognize a daughter of one of those ancient and honorable families, fortunately not rare in Canada, from whose pious ranks the Divine Master loves to recruit new laborers for his vineyard. How glorious is such a distinction! What a treasure of heavenly blessings upon the rest of the family, is the sure reward of parents

who generously give to God the son who was their pride and stay, or the daughter who above all, was their solace and their joy. In the present instance, while two sisters consecrate their lives to God as Ursulines, six of their brothers become priests, one of whom endows his country with a new institution for learning and piety<sup>1</sup>.

Mother St. Clare is described by her contemporaries as "one of those rare persons in whom the solid virtues were united to distinguished talents, who governed others without detriment to her own perfection, possessing the secret of winning the love and respect of her inferiors, maintaining with an equal hand charity, union and the observance of the rule. All the virtues shone in her daily life, yet above them all, her humility was conspicuous."

It was while Mother Brassard of St. Clare was Superior, that the Monastery celebrated on the 1st of August, 1789, its 150th Anniversary. The Centennial had found the church in all the glow of its fresh completion; but the last half-century had been a rough one, and some repairs were required. These had been attended to from the month of May, in order to perform with "as much splendor as circumstances would allow" the stately ceremonies by which religion comes to our aid, when we would publicly testify our gratitude to the Most High. "We had High Mass, say the annals, benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and a solemn *Te Deum*, to thank God for all the blessings showered down upon this house since its foundation. Mgr. de Capse,

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1—M. Louis Brassard founded the college of Nicolet in 1801. Marie-Anne Brassard of St. Madeleine entered the Convent in 1755, being the last to make profession before the conquest. She lived to 1815, having witnessed the three sieges of Quebec.

the newly consecrated bishop, kindly offered to officiate<sup>1</sup>. Several clergymen, uniting in our intentions, celebrated Mass in our chapel. We sang hymns and canticles of joy and gratitude, thanking God with all our hearts for preserving our community from all the woes that seemed to threaten us, especially when the country had passed under the rule of Great Britain."

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## CHAPTER VI

1793 - 1802

### SAD ECHOES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The ties that bound our Ursulines to France were not only those of kinship and affection, like all the other French inhabitants of Canada. There was another link peculiar to their profession: it was the sweet fraternal bond of charity, by which the members of our dear Lord's chosen friends cherish each other, in very truth, as brethren and sisters.

In Paris, that centre where the Revolution had established its stronghold, were two flourishing convents of the order of St. Ursula. One of these was not only the *Alma Mater* of all the convents of the "*Congrégation de Paris*" in France, but it had become, by adoption, the mother-house of the Ursulines of Quebec. Our readers remember that after the monastery of Tours had furnished the two pillars of the edifice, in the

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1—Mgr Jean Fr. Hubert, on taking the title of Bishop of Quebec after the decease of Bishop d'Esglis, consecrated his coadjutor M. Bailly, who bore the title of Bishop of Capse. He never took the title of Bishop of Quebec.

persons of Mother Marie de l'Incarnation and Mother St. Joseph, the greater number of the other devoted nuns from France have been designated by us as Parisians. In 1682, the union was consummated by the Ursulines of Quebec adopting the Constitution of the Ursulines of Paris. During all this period of a century and a half, the correspondence had ever been most cordial, sisterly, in every sense of the word.

Great, then, was the anxiety of the Ursulines of Quebec for the fate of their beloved sisters in France generally, but for those of Paris, especially, on account of their greater danger and the more intimate relations that existed between that community and ours. "Fatal and terrible Revolution, writes the annalist in 1794, which has accumulated woes without number for the Church and for the human race. In its efforts to destroy religion it has put an end to the monarchy, led to the scaffold the king and the most illustrious members of the royal family, raised aloft the standard of atheism, overthrown churches and altars, pillaged and profaned the sacred vessels, massacred the priests, depopulated the cloisters: in a word, caused so many evils and horrors that my pen would refuse to retrace them "

Meanwhile the dismal years of that last decade of the eighteenth century roll on, bearing distress and bloodshed from the frontiers of France through the finest countries of Europe. Rome is taken; the Holy Father, at the age of eighty-one, is a prisoner, an exile, till finally, offering his life for his flock, the illustrious Pontiff, the Father of the faithful, closes his eyes in death, a last victim to impiety, injustice and ambition.

Through all these years which, for good Catholics, for all, indeed, who had not lost the sense of ordinary humanity, were truly years of bitterness while they were years of

suffering for virtue and innocence, what had been the fate of the Ursulines of Paris ? When all religious orders had been proscribed by these red-handed revolutionaries, when wearing the monastic habit had been made a crime against the State, when hundreds of priests, monks, and nuns, had expiated on the scaffold the offence of being guiltless, had the Ursulines escaped with impunity ?

The last letter our nuns had received from their dear sisters, was dated the 18th February, 1791. It was almost entirely devoted to business-matters, arrears of rent, &c. ; for the Ursulines of Quebec had property in France, now ready to be engulfed with all other church-property by the torrent of the Revolution. " We live in sad times, we are in need of faith and confidence. I say nothing of our fears... The public papers will tell you enough. Pray for us, we are much in need of your prayers."... Such had been the laconic message, in which anxiety and sad forebodings are but too evident. No further tidings crossed the ocean during eleven long years.

At last—it was in 1802—an English merchant had brought out from London a parcel, addressed to the Ursulines of Quebec, and he called at the convent to say that it had been found accidentally, having been forgotten by the shopkeeper to whom it had been confided by some French exiles, nine years previous. The paper was yellow and dust-stained ; the handwriting, heavy and trembling. The date was " January, 13th, 1793," and was signed " De Lauge de St. Augustin, ex-Superior of the Ursulines of the Faubourg St. Jacques, Paris." The second bore the signature " P. de B. (Picard de Beaucaour) dite de Ste. Cécile."

Let us quote the touching details of their irreparable misfortunes :

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"You have doubtless heard with grief, dear Reverend Mothers, of the devastation and destruction of all religious houses in France. Our monastery, which was one of the best regulated in the kingdom, has not escaped the common fate. Your compassionate hearts would have bled to see the cloister-wall broken down, and ourselves forcibly driven from our peaceful asylum, to seek refuge wherever we could find some charitable soul to receive us. To our great regret, we are all scattered. Pity us, dear Mothers, and beg our Divine Lord to grant us the grace to make a holy use of the heavy trial he has sent us.

"All the clergy with whom we were acquainted have disappeared, and it is impossible to discover any one who may have escaped the massacre of the 24th September. Our venerable confessor and our two chaplains were certainly among the victims. I cannot enter into further details. Ask our dear Lord to give me perfect resignation." The aged Mother Superior concludes with these words: "I recommend myself to your good prayers as one already dead, for although my health is pretty good, which seems a miracle considering my seventy-four years and my cruel situation, I may not be among the living when this reaches you. The holy will of God be done. If I were younger, I think I would accept your invitation."

Both letters were devoted in great part to the affairs of our monastery. Their own misfortunes could not make these good nuns neglect any precaution in their power to prevent their Canadian Sisters' interests from suffering. The indefatigable Mother Ste. Saturnine, who had been our *dépositaire* in Paris for twenty years, was now seventy-nine years of age, and was fast going to her reward. Lodged in a poor little hut, a few leagues beyond the city walls, she was attended by the



devoted sister Ste. Cécile, who had resolved not to quit her. It is the charitable infirmarian herself who continues :

" Dear Mother Ste. Saturnine is declining rapidly and there is no hope of her recovery. Although suffering very much, she is gentle, patient, and resigned to the will of our blessed Master. Her state is a daily subject of meditation for me. I beg you to offer your most fervent prayers for her, beloved Mothers. She often thinks of you, and speaks of her dear Quebec sisters, in a manner that shows how much she loves you. She tells me, if her state allowed her to profit of your obliging invitation, she would do so with much gratitude. I share her sentiments : we all share them. What a contrast between our present position, and the time when we could make others happy ! But, my good Mothers, we must adore with submission the orders of divine Providence, convinced that every thing that happens in this world is destined to contribute to our salvation..."

Let us hasten to the conclusion of the sad drama. The dear sufferer, so meek beneath the stroke that banished her from her peaceful cloister in her old age, had gone to a better life a few days after the date of the letter we have just quoted. Her charitable companion took refuge with the venerable Superior, who finally succeeded in gathering quietly around her the scattered members of her spiritual family. It was in their midst that, four years later, her dear soul, doubly purified by affliction and patience, took its flight towards heaven. Still the exiled Ursulines continued to sigh for their cloister, and to watch for an opportunity to return to the field of their former labors, employing themselves, meanwhile with joy, in teaching the poor children they could assemble. But it was not in Paris, that centre of the revolutionary madness which had overturned both throne and altar, that so soon could be found a place for the daughters

of St. Angela, the avowed apostles of virtue and religion. One by one the links of that bright chain were broken by death, till in 1830, there were only two remaining: and, in 1835<sup>1</sup>, a traveller from Quebec was introduced to the last survivor of the Ursulines of Paris. This venerable lady of eighty-five, still bright in her intellect and clear in her faculties, had been one of the last to make profession in that noble institution before the fierce tornado of the revolution had passed, burying so much happiness, so many hopes, under the ruins of so many sanctuaries<sup>2</sup>!

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## CHAPTER VII

1800

CONTRASTED SCENES, IN THE LIFE OF MOTHER DAVANNE OF  
ST. LOUIS DE GONZAGUE

On the evening of the third of February, 1800, one who might have entered the silent chapel of the Ursuline Convent, at a quarter to six, would have found it, as is usual at that hour, vacant and in obscurity, save the one starry light gleaming before the tabernacle, announcing the MASTER'S PRESENCE there. But, no! another glance shows the kneeling

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1—The Very Rev. Thomas Maguire, V. G. of the diocese of Quebec, and chaplain of the Ursulines.

2—In 1806, an Imperial decree authorized the Ursulines to assemble in communities, but failed to restore to them their convents and property of which the Revolution had despoiled them. In 1810 the Ursulines of Paris were living at Puteaux, near Neuilly. In 1828, the few survivors were lodged in Vaugirard street, Faubourg St. Germain. Finally, in 1835, only one, Mother St. Angela, remained, as is stated above.

form of an aged nun, and by her side a diminutive lantern, whose tiny flame might barely serve to guide her footsteps in the dark of early mornings, or when the evening bell rings the call to prayer. At this unwonted hour for a visit to the chapel, Mother Davanne of St. Louis de Gonzague only remains a few moments in silent adoration and rises to retire. As she mounts the stairs that lead to the community-hall, she is met by a smiling band and escorted as in triumph.

The double door opening wide discovers all the sisterhood assembled, waiting to greet the venerable Mother, who, for eight days past, has been in retreat, preparing to renew in the fervor of her first profession those vows she pronounced sixty years ago. How joyous is each beaming countenance in this family-circle, wherein presides, in sweet maternal dignity, Mother Marchand of St. Ursula, and where are so many others, whose names are still familiar in the community: Mothers Panet of St. Bernard and St. James, Dubé of St. Ignatius, Berthelot of St. Joseph, La Ferrière of Ste. Marie, and others. Here also, for this occasion, are the amiable white-veiled novices, and among them Sisters McLaughlin of St. Henry and Dougherty of St. Augustine. With what fervor Mother Giroux des Anges has intoned that soul-thrilling chant: "ECCE QUAM BONUM," in which she is joined by the choir, in accents that make us realize indeed, how "good and pleasant a thing it is to dwell together in unity!"

This is but the prelude of the morrow's celebration, when the more sacred and solemn part of the feast being over, this most amiable and beloved Mother will again be the object of all the demonstrations of joy and affection which it has been possible for grateful hearts to invent.

The decorations of the hall are already complete. The figure 60, traced in flowers and lighted tapers, crowns the

honored NAME, equally glowing and conspicuous ; the carpeted steps of the throne over which a delicate canopy is suspended ; the gay banners inscribed with mottoes, the fragrant evergreens, hung with lamps, and blossoming in spite of nature and the rude season ; the moss-grown seats and gay parterre, where to-morrow nymphs and maidens will vocalize in joyous groups : every thing is expressive of the kind feeling that prompts these innocent festivities. Nor song, nor poem, nor enthusiastic address, nor ingenious device, will be wanting.

Mother Superior herself has arranged the programme ; the Bishop elect will preside ; a numerous clergy after celebrating the sacred Mysteries to call down new graces on this beloved *senior* of the community will be there.

But dear reader, instead of awaiting the varied entertainment, let us turn to scenes far different from these, yet scenes in which the convent heroine of this 4th of February, 1800, had a deep and sometimes a most painful part.

A domestic drama, we have said on another page, is connected with the dear name of Mother Davanne of St. Louis de Gonzague. Its commencement leads us away to Paris, that gay, fascinating, fickle, and often perilous Capital, of which Frenchmen are nevertheless so proud. There, in 1719, Marie Margu  rite Davanne was born of respectable and wealthy parents, and there she passed the first years of her childhood.

Some commercial transaction in which Mr. Davanne was engaged, entailed the ruin of his fortune, and induced him, with the little he had saved from the wreck of his hopes, to seek the shores of Canada. Bringing his family with him, he fixed his residence at the Lower Town, Quebec. The late Parisian bankrupt was active and enterprising, his business

prospered, and in a short time he had repaired his losses sufficiently to enable him to live as comfortably as before. Unfortunately, the passion of getting rich induced him to risk again in some speculation all he had acquired. The enterprise failing, again he lost all. This time, he resolved to try his fortune unattended by his family and embarked for the East Indies. Mrs. Davanne had, apparently, a moderate pension of her own; at all events, she was powerless to dissuade her husband from that long sea-voyage, destined to be so fatal to the happiness of both. Bidding adieu to his wife and children for a year, the insolvent merchant lightly stepped on board; the good ship weighed anchor and, spreading her sails, soon lost sight of the clustering houses of the Lower Town, that spot which contained all that the voyager held most dear.

We know not to which party that year seemed longest; but no news from either side once broke its tediousness.

Another and another year passed by, and yet no news of ship or traveller reached Quebec. Anxious and desponding, the unhappy woman resolved to return to France; there, at least, she might obtain some tidings of the tragical end of her husband whom already she firmly believed to be lost. Marie-Marguérite, then about eigeteen years of age, had been at the convent-school the greater part of the time since the arrival of the family in Quebec. She had meditated her consecration to God, and now, in the alternative of leaving the country, she threw herself at her mother's feet, begging leave to rejoin her beloved teachers and to make the monastery her future home.

Mrs. Davanne could not refuse her consent, and adding this new sacrifice to the others, came with her daughter to demand her admission and arrange for her entry. Unable to pay the accustomed dowry in full, Mrs. Davanne offered what

she could spare, and leaving her own portrait as the dearest souvenir to her beloved child, she bade her the last farewell, promising to write on her arrival in Paris, but uncertain whether or not she would ever return to Canada. In Paris, neither the family nor friends of Mr. Davanne had heard of him. His fate was a mystery, but the length of time he had been absent was sufficient to confirm Mrs. Davanne's fears of the worst; doubtless he had perished. Friends, with officious kindness, surround the supposed widow, who was still young and rich in that most dangerous of gifts, personal attractions. They finally persuaded her that it would not only be right to accept, but that it would be folly for her to refuse, the offers of the rich Parisian who awaited her hand. The unfortunate lady pronounced the fatal word of consent, and the marriage was celebrated. Scarcely had the echo of the brilliant wedding passed away than a vague and suspicious rumor began to circulate. In a brief space it changed to certainty: Mr. Davanne was still living!

He had been shipwrecked in his voyage from Quebec, but not lost nor discouraged. With that indomitable energy which characterized him, he had pursued his plans and found means to retrieve his ruined fortune. He had written many times to his family, but by some fatality no letter had reached its destination. Informed of his wife's return to Paris, just as he was on the point of leaving India, he determined to be himself the messenger of a brighter future; when on a sudden he heard the fatal news of the marriage she had just contracted.

Taking counsel only of his disappointment and the fury inspired by the supposed outrage, he hastens to lay the case in the blackest colors before the tribunals of justice. The hapless victim of her own imprudence, more guilty before

the law than before her own conscience, is condemned to perpetual seclusion...

While we hesitate to decide which of the two unfortunates is more to be pitied, let us return to their well-beloved daughter who, in the peaceful cloister where she is daily making new progress in perfection, is far from presaging the terrible storm that has burst over heads so dear, or the pitiless stroke that is awaiting her own innocent heart.

One afternoon, a parcel of letters from France is opened at the Mother Superior's room. Among the different addresses is the name of Mlle Marie-Marguerite Davanne. Mother Migeon of the Nativity sends for the dear novice, whose anxiety to hear from her mother all knew and shared. They commenced reading the letter together, but as the terrible truth, at first not fully realized, begins to be understood, a convulsive trembling seizes the frame of that unfortunate child of most unhappy parents. The troubled heart refusing the bitter draught, the limbs relax and the semblance of death ensues. Oh! well might the first tidings of such an excess of misery overcome the fortitude of one so unprepared for grief!

When recovered from her faint, she feels the solace of the sympathy, sincere and enlightened, which surrounds her; yet the following day told what had been the interior struggle in the acceptance of that cup bitterer than death itself. The young novice who, on retiring to her cell that night, had lifted her veil from a head as dark as the raven's wing, rose next morning with the silvery crown old age is wont to bestow: such was the effect of that one night of sorrow!

We need not ask what had been her reflections... In after years, she was often heard to say: "It was at the age of twenty-one that I began to truly appreciate the happiness

of the religious state." Yes! henceforth she knew the treacherous fragility of the dearest earthly ties, and spurning every thing that savored of the world, she aspired to nothing less than the most intimate friendship with that ONE HEART that does not change, but ever overflows with tenderness for each one of us his creatures.

The long career of Mother Davanne de St. Louis de Gonzague extended to the eighty-second year of her age, and was full of good works and of merit in the sight of Heaven. She preserved to the end the perfect use of her faculties, the freshness of her youthful piety and fervor, the cheerfulness and amiability which had made her life a perpetual sunshine in the midst of her Sisters.

If the portrait of Madame Davanne<sup>1</sup> has been preserved in the Monastery to the present day, it is not surprising that the hand of tradition has seized upon the most salient traits of the daughter's picture to present them to posterity.

According to this tradition, Mother St. Louis de Gonzague was the *beau idéal* of all that is most charming in a woman: a dignified and agreeable stature, an easy carriage, with every grace of manners and speech; an intellectual face, of which if the chisel found therein a faultless model, the artist might despair to render the expression, combining meekness, benevolence, a tender compassion for every human woe and an ardent love of God.

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1.—The portrait of Madame Davanne, an oil-painting of merit, represents her in her youth, habited in a Greek costume: the painter by giving her a palm, has transformed the lovely maiden into a St. Catherine. It was a device not uncommon in the 18th century, as a means of enabling a family-portrait to be preserved by one who had entered a convent.



Besides this portrait of the exterior, another more prized has been preserved, telling of faithfulness to grace, zeal for the glory of God and the good of souls, of the manifold duties of the religious life accomplished with a pure intention in the sight of Heaven, regardless of personal satisfaction or comfort, during that long and useful career. The gratitude of the community is particularly due to Mother St. Louis de Gonzague for the fifteen years of her administration as superior; for the courage she displayed at the epoch of the siege of 1759, when with a little band she remained to guard the convent from utter devastation; for her arduous labors in the other offices, in all of which her prudence and charity, with a boundless love for her community, were most conspicuous.

One day the whole household was assembled around the aged and beloved Mother, as we have seen, to congratulate her on the tenth anniversary of her golden Jubilee. Among the poems on that occasion there was one in the form of an enigma, that describes, in another light, Mother St. Louis de Gonzague: with this little poem we shall conclude this brief sketch of her life and character. It is entitled

THE PIOUS SECRET

On earth to live all creatures try;  
For me, I only seek to die.  
Trials and sufferings I endure,  
And thus from evil keep me pure:  
The greatest enemy I know,  
Is self,—that is my real foe.  
Death waits for mortals at life's end;  
For me, I die each day I spend.  
Although my soul endures the while,  
Imprisoned in the body vile,  
She loves to lift her pinions high,  
And sail unfettered to the sky.

To God my all I gladly give !  
I live—no, 'tis not I that live ;  
It is—but I too much have told,  
The secret you may well unfold !  
Guess what it is. Well, have you said ?  
Do tell us, if all doubts have fled.  
Have you divined ?—‘ O yes, 'tis clear,  
It is a soul to Heaven most dear,  
Some saint, perhaps.’ You’re on the road ;  
One trial more, you’ll have it good.  
Never enigma was so plain.  
Come, Reverend Mother, try again !  
—Truly, my patience can no longer wait.  
It is YOURSELF !—the portrait is no feint.

(From the French of Father GLAPION, S. J.)

## CHAPTER VIII

1793 - 1818

### SUPERIORS IN THE EARLY PART OF THE 19TH CENTURY

MOTHERS ST. URSULA AND ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

From the closing years of the last century up to the date of 1839, we meet the names of six Superiors, of whom one, a contemporary of all the others, the beloved and venerated Mother St. Gabriel, was happily living till 1888, having attained the age of ninety-two years, when she confided the chain of tradition with affectionate care to the keeping of those who are destined to preserve it strong and bright, even as it now lies within our grasp.

It is a goodly and cheering picture to bring before us the leading traits that distinguished these worthy Mothers,

the three last, Mothers St. Henry, St. Andrew and St. Gabriel being of our own day : their countenance, equally humble, mind and serene ; the smile that told of a heart overflowing with charity ; the truly maternal care and foresight that forgot no one and overlooked no want ; the encouraging spur of a living rule which their lives ever offered, while they were for us the oracles of God, declaring to us from day to day His holy will in our regard.

The most distant figure of the group is Mother Taschereau of St. Francis Xavier, first called to the superiority in 1793, and re-elected at various periods till she had governed fifteen years.

Mother Marchand of St. Ursula, charged in 1799 by the unanimous voice of her Sisters to succeed Mother St. Francis Xavier, opens the century under the happiest auspices. The names of both these worthy Mothers, ever held in veneration among us, are synonymous with all that is most honorable in family descent, in amiable qualities and natural abilities, as well as with all that is most edifying and exemplary in the life of a holy religious.

Mother St. Ursula, known in the world as Miss Marie Marguerite Marchand, was a native of Verchères, and a descendant of the de Boucherville family by her mother Marguerite Boucher de Niverville. While yet a novice under the excellent training of Mother Davanne of St. Louis de Gonzague, she gave evidence of that maturity of judgment and those inestimable qualities of the mind and heart which rendered her so precious to the community, whether in the noble function of teacher, or in the other offices to which she was occasionally appointed.

The annals, deploring her premature loss in 1815, depict her as one of the pillars of the monastery.

"In this incomparable Mother, says the writer, we had a Superior who in her government gave universal satisfaction. Noble and generous in mind, prepossessing in manners, as capable for business as she was amiable and cheerful in conversation, her agreeable and expressive countenance was the exact index of her soul. Her piety was solid and enlightened, her gentleness unfailing, her courage magnanimous. Mother St. Ursula had just been re-elected as superior for the fourth time, when she was attacked by that cruel malady, inflammatory rheumatism. During nine weeks, she had hardly a moment's respite from multiplied and intense sufferings. Thus she became a living copy of her patroness, St. Ursula, meriting by her invincible patience to be associated to the Martyr's crown."

Neither the best medical attendance nor the sympathy of friends of every rank, who united their prayers to those of the afflicted community, was sufficient to arrest or delay the progress of the cruel malady. Among the many kind letters addressed to the dear sufferer, there was one which she requested to hear again and again. It was from the celebrated Abbé de Calonne, who was then residing at Three Rivers. The letter has been carefully preserved, and is so replete with Christian consolation and encouragement that we have thought fit to transcribe a few lines.

After testifying the liveliest interest in the recovery of the venerable patient, the Abbé exclaims: "Ah! how few persons there are who understand practically the value of sufferings! It is when Jesus visits us with the cross that we are sure of being agreeable to Him. The Feet of Jesus nailed to that cruel Wood during three hours sufficed for the conversion of the universe; these same Feet employed during three years in bearing in every direction, light and instruction, gained

only five hundred disciples. It is not he who labors most for the glory of God, nor he that receives the most favors that is the holiest, but he who is the most crucified; in proof whereof behold the Blessed Virgin. To suffer in silence for Jesus amidst crosses, anguish and humiliations, oh, that is being truly like unto Jesus! There is nothing greater, holier or more to be desired."

So well did our beloved Mother St. Ursula understand and put in practice this doctrine, that it pleased the Almighty to bestow upon her the grace of a complete resignation to the will of God, a cheerful intrepidity in the view of her approaching dissolution, the exercise of a lively faith in the reception of the last sacraments, and, finally, a calm and peaceful exit from this world with the firm assurance of a better. Mother St. Ursula was the third Superior whose decease in that office had plunged the community into grief. She was but sixty-one years of age, forty-five of which had been devoted to the service of God within the cloister.

Mother Marie Anne Taschereau of St. Francis Xavier was enjoying the repose of comparative obscurity after guiding the community twelve years, when she was elected again at the age of seventy-one, to replace the much lamented Mother St. Ursula. The following year a Golden Jubilee, celebrating the half-century's services of the "admirable Mother," afforded the inmates of the Monastery an opportunity of manifesting their sentiments of love and gratitude, leaving a pleasant and enduring impression in the minds of all who shared the festivities.

But there are other memories to be collected here around the beloved and honored name of Mother Marie Anne Louise Taschereau of St. Francis Xavier.

At the tender age of five, the little daughter of the Hon. Thomas Jacques Taschereau, first crossed the threshold of the convent, her dark eyes sparkling with joy as she glided from her loving mother's arms to those of the good nuns. Holidays came often and lasted long while the little pupil was under ten years of age. Then came the days preparatory to first Communion, when dolls and noisy games are joyfully relinquished for the sake of the sweet, yet sublime lessons contained in that unpretending little volume, the catechism. The teachers of Mary Anne remarked with delight the unfolding of the precious germs of future excellence, as that young heart opened to the influence of grace under their careful guidance.

At the age of fifteen, Miss Taschereau rejoined the family circle definitively. It was the year of the Cession. If the gaieties of city-life were for a while banished from Quebec, they returned with the first dawn of peace, and they were by no means despised by this young lady. During three or four years, she lost no opportunity of sharing the pleasures the world offers its votaries, yet, like many others, failed to find in them the happiness they so loudly promise. The grace of a special call to abandon the world was in reserve for her: it was heard during the exercises of the novena of St. Francis Xavier, which, a century ago, was celebrated in Quebec at the beginning of Lent, with as much zeal as at the present day.

While an eloquent preacher of the Society of Jesus, was unfolding with lucidity the sacred text, many a sinner beat his breast with holy compunction, and even among the just was heard the inquiry: "What shall I do to become more pleasing to God?" One, at least, in that assembly heard in her heart the Saviour's answer, containing the evangelical

counsels of perfection : " Go, sell what thou hast and distribute thy goods to the poor : then, come and follow me that thou mayst have a great reward in Heaven."

Docile to the proffered grace, and fortified by the approval of the director of her conscience, Miss Taschereau sought to execute her pious project with as little delay as possible. A few weeks only after the novena, all her preparations were accomplished. Regarding the monastery as the ark of her salvation, she quit the world and all she held most dear with a courageous heart and a holy intrepidity, which could have been inspired only by the Holy Ghost.

" Never was there a more fervent candidate for the white veil. She desired to bear the name of St. Francis Xavier, having received the grace of her vocation through his intercession. From that moment, she adopted the great Apostle of the Indies as the model of her own ardor in the service of God. In these admirable dispositions she embraced all the practices of the religious life, and seemed to fly rather than to walk in the ways of perfection, advancing from virtue to virtue with undeviating perseverance. Naturally ardent and impetuous, her first attention was given to moderating her too great vivacity, and to acquiring the virtues of meekness and humility. By vigilance and prayer she soon obtained a complete victory over herself, thus rendering her soul most agreeable to the heavenly Bridegroom who had chosen her for his spouse.

Mother St. Xavier was particularly happy in forming to virtue the young persons confided to her care for their education. Her talents, as well as her inclination, fitted her in a special manner for the important charge of teacher, and for many years her zeal found an ample field for exertion in that department.

During thirty years, she occupied alternately the office of superior and depositary. In both she was a model which her successors would esteem themselves happy to imitate. As superior, she was zealous in preserving the primitive spirit of simplicity, poverty, and retirement watchful to maintain the observance of the rule even in its minutest points; attentive to procure the advancement of each member of the community in the solid virtues of humility and charity. Thus did our worthy Mother St. Francis Xavier prove that her vocation was truly from above, her life tending, as our constitutions demand, "*to the glory of God, the salvation of her own soul, and the good of the community.*"

At the age of eighty-two, this venerable Mother was still one of the first to quit her cell at the early hour of rising and hasten to cast herself at the foot of the tabernacle in prayer. The crown of age rested so lightly upon her brow that it seemed an ornament rather than a burden, and the community hoped to enjoy the precious advantage of her counsels and example many years longer, when in March, 1825, an epidemic affection of the lungs laid her prostrate. In the space of a few days, severing the tender ties that bound her to her family of the cloister, she was reunited forever to that dearer home-circle in heaven, where separations are unknown <sup>1</sup>.

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1.—Mother St. Xavier's brother, the Hon. G. E. Taschereau, Seigneur of La Beauce, father of the two Hon. Judges Taschereau, and grandfather of His Eminence Cardinal Taschereau, was a signal benefactor of the Ursulines by the care he bestowed upon their temporal affairs.



## CHAPTER IX

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GRACE STRONGER THAN NATURE

## VOCATION OF THE MISSES BERTHELOT

The human heart is a spiritual battlefield, where grace and nature are in daily contact, each striving to obtain the mastery of that stronghold, the will. Happy the soul that, watchful for the moment when the decisive blow is to be cast, calls on Heaven for succor and assures her salvation by rendering grace victorious.

Such is the reflection that will naturally strike the reader's mind, as it has our own, on witnessing the triumph of divine grace in the vocation of the Misses Berthelot. By the prominent position of their family in the city of Quebec, these young ladies were much exposed to be led away by the frivolous pleasures and vanities of the world.

Julia and her sister Teresa, one year older than herself, were inseparable companions, whether in the convent as school-girls, or in society. Moreover, in the family circle, the ties of nature and affection were knit so closely, the enjoyments were so real and each member seemed so necessary to the happiness of the others, that no thought of a separation seemed admissible. The two sisters were certainly pious and edifying, yet they disdained neither the fashions nor the gaieties of the world. One evening, or morning rather, as they were returning from a ball, their carriage drove past the convent, just as the bell rang out its early call at four o'clock. The nuns were rising to offer to God the matin tribute of prayer and praise; the peace of their souls was

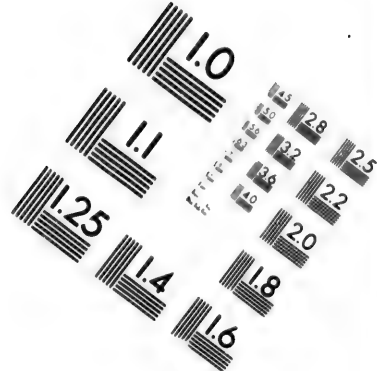
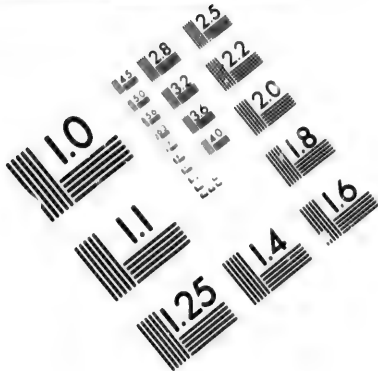
undisturbed by idle regrets for baffled schemes of vanity, or aching remorse for stifling the voice of conscience.

"Would to Heaven, thought Julia, that my own heart were as free and pure!" The carriage had paused at the door of the rich merchant's aristocratic residence. The two young ladies alighted, and mounted to their perfumed dressing-room; but before retiring to rest, the youngest of the two sisters had cast herself upon her knees, and offered herself to God for a better purpose than had hitherto engaged her thoughts.

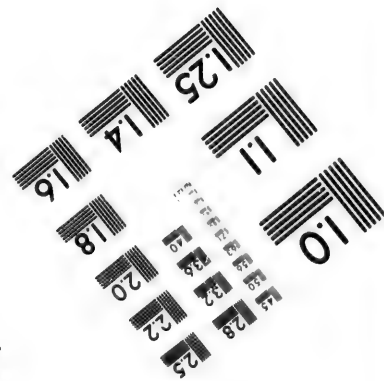
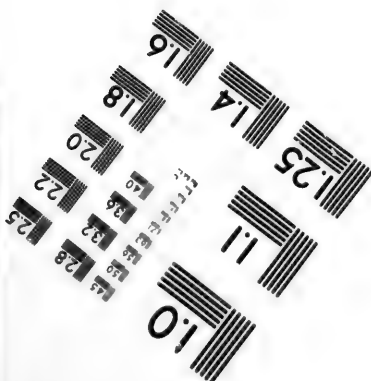
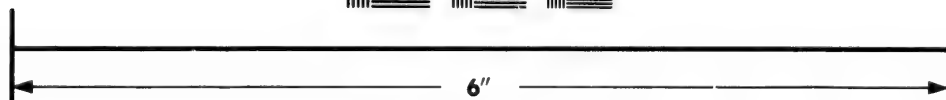
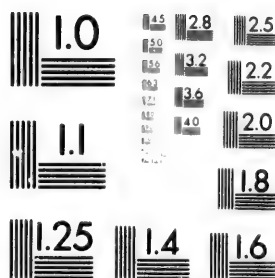
A few days later, it was discovered that Julia had serious thoughts of embracing the religious life. For the first time, the two sisters were of different minds. Teresa could see nothing but folly in the project of renouncing the world and immuring one's self in the cloister. The "belle" of Quebec would certainly not follow her sister's example, nor throw aside her jewels, her lace, her wreaths of flowers, for the robe of serge, the linen head-dress and black veil of a nun. "Promise me, papa, she cries, that you will never consent to see me enter a convent. Should I ever be so infatuated as to desire it, like my sister Julia, do you at least preserve me from such madness."

Mr. Berthelot willingly gave his word. His own share in the sacrifice of his younger daughter was quite enough, he thought, and he knew the heavenly gates are not made to open exclusively on the inmates of a cloister.

The two sisters were together at the convent-parlor when Julia demanded to be received among the daughters of St. Ursula. The nuns were unprepared to think that either of the young ladies was destined for the religious life. Both were dressed in the height of the fashion, in rustling silks, over which was worn an apron, or over-skirt, as it would now be



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termed, of finest lawn bordered with the costliest valenciennes; their head-dress was interwoven with flowers that trembled on stems of silver and gold: their whole attire was of the utmost elegance.

Mother St. Clare, who was Superior at the time (1789), not contenting herself with objections drawn from the obligation to give up one's will, to practise mortification, to live in poverty, and in conformity to the rule, sought to try the vocation of the candidate by ocular demonstration. Sending to the wash-room for one of the coarse hempen aprons in use there down to the present day, she displayed the article to her visitors, warning Miss Julia that if she became a nun, she would be required to wear a similar one and to aid in the rough labor it seemed to typify<sup>1</sup>.

All this was not enough to alarm a generous heart. Julia entered the novitiate, leaving her sister to meditate on the wonders wrought by divine grace.

But another wonder was preparing. Like the youthful Gerard, who complained that his share was not equal to that of his brothers when they had abandoned the whole paternal domain to him, choosing heaven for their portion, so Teresa felt herself in the wrong in preferring wordly pleasures to the service of God. The day came when repenting of the opposition she had shown to her sister's vocation, she was ready to beg on bended knees that her father would forget the promise she had once exacted of him. But Mr. Berthelot had

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1—It is only of late years, since the labors of teaching have become multiplied, that the choir-nuns have ceased to aid in the wash-room. The writer of these pages remembers well having had her fingers aching and bleeding by the over generous use of the same wash-board, perhaps, that had served in the time of these ancient Mothers.

not pledged his word to release himself from it so easily. For fully twelve months, Teresa expiated the rash precaution she had taken to prevent herself from becoming a nun. In after-times, she used to relate the story of her self-imposed troubles, always declaring that she only found the treatment she merited.

The two sisters, thus reunited after a brief separation, had the consolation of witnessing each other's progress in virtue and enjoying each other's society in the House of God during nearly forty years.

Mother St. Francis was slight and delicate in figure, naturally gentle, affable, and exquisitely polite. The full eulogium given by the annalist, and the regrets of the community, when a peaceful, happy death deprived the house of a useful and most edifying member, do not surprise us.

As to Mother St. Joseph, who was Superior from 1824 to 1827, and who lived till 1846, no one who knew her will fail to remember her as the type of the lady, refined, amiable, and gentle in word and manner. "Her piety was accompanied by that simplicity which is the result of a child-like confidence in God, at the same time that it proved the calmness and innocence of her soul. Her favorite virtue was humility; her constant aim, to conform herself to the will of others, revering in the voice of her superiors that of God Himself. In whatever office she was employed, she regarded herself as happy in fulfilling her duty for the glory of God and the good of souls."

It was during the superiority of Mother St. Joseph (1826) that the Ursulines of Quebec opened, with the recently established convent of their Order in Waterford, Ireland, a correspondence which extended even to the pupils. It resulted

in an intimate interchange of good offices, a union of heart and purpose which have been a source of mutual edification and interest during half a century.

"During the last two years of her life, this dear Mother seemed to have death ever before her eyes. In the conviction of her approaching end, she redoubled her fervor and her austerities, seeking occasion to impose upon herself new sacrifices. She was preparing to celebrate her golden Jubilee, which would occur on the 2nd of February, when, about a month previous, she fell ill of the typhoid fever. A few days of suffering borne with exemplary patience sufficed to break the slender thread of life, ensuring her pure soul the possession of that Eternal Good for which she had long labored and sighed. It was on the 5th of January, 1842."

The dear Waterford Nuns could only be warned by the spring vessels that our much esteemed Mother St. Joseph was no more. In the mean time, in order to celebrate the GOLDEN JUBILEE truly in the Lord, these devoted Sisters had asked for general communions according to the intention of the venerated Ursuline of Quebec, in all the convents of Ireland Ursulines, Sisters of Mercy, and others. They had begged the prayers of the Jesuits, Trappists, Lazarists and Brothers of the Christian schools. In their own community there were rejoicings, vows and prayers, in keeping with the warmth of their true, Irish hearts. It was a strange contrast to the month's *Requiem* in Quebec; yet, how beautiful in the sight of God, who is above all the GOD OF CHARITY. Our pious annalist expresses the hope "that the dear Mother, for whom this mingled concert of mourning and rejoicing met from the two shores of the Atlantic, contemplated the scene from her throne in heaven, while we adore in silence the dispensations of Divine Providence, regulating all things for the good of the elect."

Mother St. Joseph had been the annalist and Chapter-secretary from 1823 to 1841; the last lines she traced in the annals were written within a few weeks of her death.

Having mentioned Mother Berthelot of St. Joseph in the capacity of superior, as well as that of annalist, let us not separate her from her successor in both offices, Mother Marguerite Boissonnault of St. Monica, a native of the parish of St. Valier, near Quebec. It was as a casual visitor that Miss Boissonnault first became acquainted with the Ursulines, to whose labors she was associated in 1813.

Doubtless it was a great surprise to herself when, only twelve years after her profession, she was called to exercise the office of Superior. Mother St. Monica was not however blessed with health: she was often a sufferer, but edified her Sisters at all times, by her patience and resignation as well as by her regularity, her zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. It was one of her greatest consolations to be able to render service to youth by teaching, particularly in the department of the extern-school, where she presided many years as mistress-general. Another ardent wish of her heart was gratified in seeing several members of her family called to consecrate their lives to God, in the religious or in the ecclesiastical state <sup>1</sup>. A great veneration for the traditions of the house and the heroic times of Canada her country, a spirit of research joined to a taste for history, supplied the

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1—Rev. L. Ed. Bois, the worthy pastor who labored with so much zeal during thirty-five years in the parish of Maskinongé, is a nephew of our deceased Mother St. Monica. The real services he has rendered his country by his excellent historical writings may be traced to a bent of mind similar to that we have noticed above in his esteemed relative. Two of Mr. Bois' sisters entered the religious state in the Ursuline Convent of Three Rivers.



want of a regular course of studies, and furnished Mother St. Monica with a fund of information both useful and entertaining. Notwithstanding her delicate health, our venerated Mother lived to attain the seventy-third year of her age, of which she had devoted fifty to the service of God in the cloister.

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## CHAPTER X

1806 - 1808

### THE URSULINES OF THREE RIVERS, GUESTS OF THEIR SISTERS IN QUEBEC

On the 14th of October, 1806, at the unwonted hour of nine o'clock in the evening, the conventual door of the Monastery opened to admit sixteen Ursulines from Three Rivers. Shivering with the cold, weary and benighted, how welcome was the aspect of the cloister! doubly welcome by its contrast with the discomforts of that small vessel in which they had been tossed during four days. How touchingly it reminded them of their own dear retreat, from which the pitiless flames had lately driven them! How affecting was the sympathy betraying itself in tears, the tender embrace, the cordial, sisterly reception that awaited them!

The hour was late for the convent, but quickly the news had circulated from cell to cell, as if by the electric wires, and sister after sister gathered in, for how could they delay till morning to testify their joy at such a meeting and their grief at its cause? Quickly the hospitable fires rekindled, provided the steaming tea-urn, the restoring evening repast,

while the low murmur of scarcely audible, yet animated conversation showed that the law of silence may sometimes yield, in a deferential way, to the superior law of charity.

The conflagration of the monastery of Three Rivers had taken place a month previous; yet how many details remained to be made known. Dear reader, you have not failed to witness one of those too frequent, and ever heart-rending scenes: the fire seizing upon the peaceful dwelling of a happy family, the belching smoke, the hurried issue of the frightened inmates; the din, the flames, the deafening shouts, the promiscuous gathering crowds. Such, and even more sad had been the spectacle beheld at Three Rivers, on the 2nd of September.

It was not without difficulty that the nuns and their boarders, with the poor sick people of the hospital, avoided the awful fate that threatened them. The escape of all, under the circumstances, seemed almost miraculous. In less than an hour from the first alarm, the convent, the hospital, the church, with roofs fallen in and crumbling walls, had been transformed to monuments of ruin and devastation.

Here were youth and age, the nuns and the objects of their care, all driven at night-fall from their happy asylum, and suddenly thrust upon the charity of the public. The good people of Three Rivers, for whom the affliction of the nuns was a family sorrow, and the burning of the monastery a real calamity, were not slow to manifest their sympathy and their good will. From every side were heard pressing offers of shelter and hospitality; but, as the fire slackened, the nuns perceived that there still remained to them two small buildings, the extern school-house and the bake-house. Within these narrow limits, like our own nuns on a similar occasion, they determined to reside, clinging to the cloister

like the bird to its nest, even when the branch is severed from the tree.

Although lodgings were found, there was still sufficient room for the exercise of charity. A religious community is a large family to provide for, and there were besides, the patients of the hospital. Later, it was arranged that a part of the nuns should accept the invitation of their Mothers of Quebec, as we have seen.

Mother St. Olivier the Superior, with Mothers Ste. Croix, St. Angela, and a lay-sister remained within the cloister, making a home of the bake-house, where they managed to keep up a day-school while the reconstruction of the monastery was going on. The same narrow apartment served as a chapel on Sundays for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Such were the lodgings and accommodations of these generous nuns during thirteen months, at the end of which (November, 1807), their new monastery was ready to receive them.

Returning now to the guests so cordially welcomed in the Old Monastery, let us continue to observe the scene. Among them our nuns have recognized many a relative or former pupil. But above all others, one attracted their attention and tender compassion: this was an aged nun, so feeble and wayworn, that as she entered, she needed the supporting arm of her Sisters. It was Mother Teresa of Jesus (Ursule Baby) who by a singular destiny, after spending fifty-five years in the monastery of Three Rivers and governing it as superior, was now coming to end her days among her former Mothers, the Ursulines of Quebec. She was returning to them, like a long absent wanderer to the home of her youth; to find the friends of former days departed, many old familiar

haunts changed or faded from memory. Not one of the dearly beloved teachers of her childhood remained to embrace her. Mother Davanne of St. Louis de Gonzague had survived till lately, but she too was gone, and she was the last of those olden times "before the Conquest." Two of the oldest nuns, Mother Brassard of St. Magdalen and Mother Cureux of Ste. Agathe, both in their seventieth year, may have met her as a boarder, but they could scarcely claim the title of old schoolmates.

Mother Teresa of Jesus was already looking forward to meet her former friends in heaven without a long delay. She had not found them among the living, but she had come to mingle her ashes with theirs in the tomb.

It was a precious occasion for our nuns to surround the dying bed of their venerable Sister with all the soothing care that kindness can imagine or charity bestow. The patient sufferer, as edifying as she was beloved, lingered but a few weeks, and after receiving the last consolations of our holy religion, gently passed to a better life on the 14th of November, amid the united prayers and regrets of the two communities. The Office for the dead, the burial service, the last look at the beloved and honored remains, the lowering of the coffin into the vault, sealed a second compact of union and affection between the two houses, while the first yet subsisted in all its fulness.

Two of the Sisters were recalled in January to aid the little band in Three Rivers. The remaining thirteen continued with their Mothers of Quebec, where they were as much at home as if they had always formed a part of the community. At the end of fifteen months a new convent stood in place of that destroyed by the fire. The letter announcing that the structure was completed recalled the

sisters from Quebec. A winter's journey of five days in covered sleighs took the exiles home, one band in January, the other in February, 1808. "The separation, says our annalist, was not effected without many tears on both sides."

The Ursulines of Three Rivers might well bless the kind hand of Providence for the restoration of their monastery and hospital; it was a munificent gift to receive from the liberality of friends. Their chief benefactor on this occasion was Bishop Plessis, who took upon himself the responsibility of directing the work and bringing it to a happy conclusion, generously supplying whatever was wanting in the funds furnished by the government and by the public.

According to the estimation of the eminent Prelate, "the accident of the conflagration was permitted to show that the resources of divine Providence are boundless, and to afford the faithful of the diocese the occasion to manifest their charity, and testify their gratitude for the invaluable services the Ursulines have rendered all classes of society."

Our readers must be aware that prosperity has not ceased to shine upon that excellent community down to the present day. The spacious and commodious buildings erected in 1808, have received several important additions, according to the increasing wants; for in Three Rivers as in the other parts of Canada, an awakened interest in the cause of education has been promptly met by the corresponding zeal of educational establishments. Successive additions to the convent-buildings, of late years, have enabled our Sisters to offer every desirable accommodation to their numerous pupils.

## CHAPTER XI

1822

THE URSULINES OF QUEBEC AID THE URSULINES OF  
NEW ORLEANS

Five years after Bienville, like another Champlain, had traced in the midst of a wilderness the site of a capital which he foresaw would become the metropolis of a flourishing colony, French Ursulines from the city of Rouen had accepted a pressing invitation to found there a convent of their Order.

The heroic little band, consisting of nine professed Sisters and a novice, embarked in February, 1727, to reach their destination only after being often harassed by tropical storms, twice pursued and nearly taken by corsairs, threatened with shipwreck by the tempests of the Carribean Sea, till at the end of five months they escape the perils of the Gulf only to be stranded on a sea-bar at the mouth of the Mississippi.

Rescued from the danger of perishing here, they have still a fortnight's voyage through the tortuous *passages*, by which the river finds its way amid the sea-marshes that ages have accumulated at the entrance of the Gulf. At last, late in July, they have reached the "village" of New Orleans.

As nearly a century previous in Quebec, when Marie de l'Incarnation and her courageous companions were received with rejoicings, so in New Orleans, "the Governor and the principal people of the town came forward to welcome the nuns as the best treasure the mother-country had ever sent them <sup>1</sup>."

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1—*The Ursulines in Louisiana*, by a Sister of Mercy.

Lodged in a large country-house belonging to the Governor while their convent was being built, they were soon surrounded by children of every hue and race. These devoted Ursulines found means to render the services which would have sufficed to employ three or four different institutions. Instruction for colored women, a day-school for children, a hospital, a house of refuge: such were the good works commenced by the Ursulines within three years of their foundation.

The terrible massacre of the Natchez, which happened soon after, gave them the melancholy occasion of opening a vast orphanage. Thus the foundresses of the Monastery of New Orleans had a providential mission to accomplish before they entered upon the regular duties of their vocation as Ursulines

From time to time, our nuns had corresponded by letter with their sister-Ursulines on the subject of requested aid. It was not pecuniary aid that was solicited, the convent being richly endowed, but something more difficult to obtain, and which in Louisiana was rarer than money. That colony, so different from Canada, both as to the quality of its first settlers and the enervating effects of its climate, offered few vocations for religious establishments. On the other hand, Quebec, by the difficulty of communication, was farther from New Orleans than from Paris. "A year's journey, says Mother St. Louis de Gonzague, is really too long to be thought of. Were it a question of going to France, we might deliberate, but not to the Mississippi."

In 1821, Bishop Plessis received from Bishop Dubourg, to whom the diocese of New Orleans had lately been confided, a communication exposing the necessities of that precious institution "so necessary to the welfare of his flock, now

sorely tried and in danger of perishing, if not succored in season" <sup>1</sup>. In the words of Bishop Dubourg "the ancient columns of the edifice were in a state of decay, and at the approaching moment of their fall, there would be found only feeble reeds to supply their place." The demand was therefore, for "three or four professed nuns of mature age, of good judgment and formed to the practice of virtue, to fill up the interval between the aged and the young." The case was clear, but the prospect of giving up several subjects so precious to any community was not inviting.

The negotiations, however, were not abandoned, and the following year (1822), three candidates for the arduous mission were named. They were Mother Félicité Borne of St. Charles, Angélique Bougie of St. Louis de Gonzague, and Pélagie Morin of St. Etienne, all between thirty and forty years of age, and well qualified for the difficult position that awaited them. The gratitude of the worthy Bishop, and of the Ursulines of New Orleans, on learning the happy issue of their appeal, was without bounds. "A thousand blessings upon you, writes Bishop Dubourg to Bishop Plessis, for the benevolent interest you have taken in the success of my petition. Our Ursulines share my gratitude, both towards your Lordship, and towards their honored Sisters of Quebec. We shall receive the precious acquisition as a present from Heaven, and as a new mark of that wonderful goodness of God which we have experienced so palpably for several years past."

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<sup>1</sup>—The Monastery counted nearly a century of existence; yet, as in the times when our own Mother Mary of the Incarnation and Mother St. Athanasius were asking help from France, the community of New Orleans consisted of the aged and the young, without the intermediate link, the middle-aged, uniting the maturity and the experience necessary for the more important offices.



The great decision being taken, preparations were made for the journey. It was quite an event, not only for the three good Mothers, the even tenor of whose life was so unexpectedly disturbed, but for the wide circle of friends, relatives, and acquaintances, scattered through the length and breadth of the country.

The departure was definitively fixed for the third of October. On the second, Bishop Plessis came to the Convent to offer Mass, and give Communion to the generous missionaries, happy to see them prepared to make their sacrifice with generosity. Revd. Father Maguire, then pastor of the country-parish of St. Michel, had been chosen to be the Raphael of the journey, preluding by this signal service the many benefits he would have occasion later to bestow upon the Ursulines of Quebec. On the day of the departure, the touching prayers for travellers in the Itinerary of the Roman ritual, were recited after Mass with emotions not easy to describe ; nor shall we attempt to tell how that last day at home was passed.

At six o'clock the parting embrace had been given ; a last *adieu* had separated them whom mutual charity and a similar choice of Heaven had united in the sacred bonds of religious friendship.

The three nuns, in travelling attire, pass the convent door, traverse the silent groups of sympathizing friends, enter the carriages that are waiting for them, and are conducted as in triumph to the wharf in the Lower Town. The steamboat, lying at anchor and illuminated to honor the occasion, remained near the quay till an advanced hour of the evening, in order to allow the visits of friends to be prolonged.

At Three Rivers, another Ursuline, Mother Normanville of St. Helen, was waiting to offer a similar sacrifice by joining the missionary-band, thus completing the number of

professed nuns demanded. Captain Morin, who seemed to have placed his vessel entirely at the disposal of the travellers, waited till they had visited the convent, and received the blessing of the revered Abbé de Calonne.

On Saturday, at four o'clock P. M., they were at Montreal. The quay was crowded with people, eager to see those Ursulines who were so courageously exiling themselves for the love of God, but their prudent conductor, Rev. Thomas Maguire, enabled them to avoid the gaze of the curious. Capt. Morin landed them on a private wharf, within a few rods of the Hôtel-Dieu. The kindness of these good nuns, the cordial welcome of the Sisters of the Congregation and all the affection that awaited them at the General Hospital, were described by our voyagers in grateful terms. After pausing only one day in Montreal, they proceed to New York, with an addition to their party of three young ladies from Detroit, candidates also for the life of the cloister in the South.

It was not a mere day's journey, at that time, to go from Montreal to New York. Between La Prairie and Lake Champlain our travellers had to endure the fatigue of carriage-conveyance; thence by steamboat, amid "passengers of every color, and almost every nation," they reach the great city on the 11th October, the fifth day after leaving Montreal.

Happy were the tired travellers to receive hospitality at the hands of the Sisters of Charity, recently founded in the United States by that admirable woman, Mother Seton. On the 21st October, Father Maguire resigned his post as conductor of the missionary band, in favor of Rev. Mr. Janvier, a worthy priest deputed by Bishop Dubourg to this effect, and the whole company embarked for a sea-voyage of twenty days.

More adventures than pleasures were in store for them. They had not been a week out at sea, when the most oppressive heat they had ever experienced gave them a foretaste of the zone they were approaching. Then a furious storm came on, during which a sailor was swept overboard. In attempting to rescue the unfortunate man, the vessel was for a moment on the point of being submerged ; the waves came dashing over the deck inundating the passengers' rooms, and, but for a skilful manœuvre, a watery grave might have been the end of the voyage. But this was nothing in comparison with the peril of an encounter with pirates. Happily the Captain perceived their ship soon enough to avoid being the first attacked. The thirty men-passengers on board were armed, and ordered on deck to aid the mariners, their seven guns were charged, and a vigorous fire soon forced the pirates to draw off. As the enemy disappeared, the packet-ship spread her sails and soon regained the time lost. The terror of our poor nuns may easily be conceived ; but as no harm befell them, they had only to change their petitions for the protection of Heaven into thanksgivings.

A false rumor, however, gave their friends in Canada more than six weeks of cruel suspense and anxiety. The report was that the pirates had captured the packet-ship and made the crew prisoners, retaining their prize twenty-four hours, when another vessel, the *Alligator*, had attacked the pirates and forced them to give up their booty. Such a catastrophe was commented upon and deplored on every side ; there was no end of conjectures and visits of condolence. It was only on the second of January that letters from our nuns furnished a correct account of the affair. This was promptly published on the newspaper *Le Canadien*, in order to relieve the anxiety of the many friends interested in the fate of the voyagers.

In the mean time, our Ursulines had reached their destination. The venerable Superior, Mother St. Michael, who had been inspired to ask for them, had only waited, it would seem, to hear that her request was granted, in order to die contented, in the assurance that her dear community would be well provided for. Her successor wrote, with a gratitude most touching, her thanks for "the precious boon, praying that the Almighty might preserve the dear Sisters long, for the salvation of so many souls who, without the instruction given in the convent, would never know God."

The generous exiles, on their part, were not disappointed in their new Sisters; the kindness with which they were greeted on arriving was but one instance of the charity that reigned supreme in the convent, and which ever surrounded them with its ineffable charms.

In 1824, the Ursulines of New Orleans exchanged their ancient convent in the city for a more salubrious site, at the distance of about three miles, where they built their present monastery, a spacious brick edifice three hundred feet long, with wings in the rear.

Our Sisters continued to render important services to their adopted community till called to their reward, Mother St. Louis de Gonzague in 1833, Mother St. Etienne in 1846. One was still living, in 1849, to welcome and encourage two other members of the Monastery of Quebec, Mothers Victoria White of St. Jane Frances de Chantal, and Catherine Burke of St. Thomas, on their way to aid the newly-founded convent of Ursulines in Galveston, Texas.

Although Mother St. Charles, the latest survivor, always suffered from the climate of New Orleans, so different from that of her native land, still her vigorous constitution bore her to the advanced age of sixty-nine years, thirty of which she had passed in the South.

The triple link between the two oldest communities of Ursulines in America was strengthened again in 1836, when through the mysterious decrees of Divine Providence, the devoted little band of Ursulines, driven from their convent on Mt. Benedict (Charlestown, Mass.), took refuge with the various communities of their Order, two remaining with the Ursulines of Quebec, two others joining the Ursulines of Three Rivers, while three offered themselves to the convent of New Orleans. The important services these sorely tried religious were enabled to render, in each of these their adopted communities, must have served to console them, and gradually to efface the remembrance of the disaster, with the long-nourished hope of seeing it repaired.

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## CHAPTER XII

1800-1839

MOTHER McLOUGHLIN OF ST. HENRY AND MOTHER DOUGHERTY  
OF ST. AUGUSTINE

### PIONEERS OF ENGLISH TEACHING IN THE CONVENT

With the dawn of the nineteenth century, the thistle and the shamrock entwine for the first time with the fleur-de-lis and the maple-leaf, beneath the sheltering roof of the Old Monastery. The year 1800 ushers in as candidates for religious profession, Mothers Mary Louisa McLoughlin of St. Henry and Elizabeth Dougherty of St. Augustine, whose names unmistakably betoken their Scotch and Irish lineage. Henceforth, the blooming garland, intermingled more or less with the rose, in some of its varieties, will not cease to glow

within the sacred shrine of St. Ursula, the different leaves and flowers clasping in such close embrace that to part them would be to destroy.

In the two worthy Mothers above named we have the pioneers of English instruction in the convent. Directed hither as if to answer the requirements of the period, providing the "right persons at the right time," their vocation affords another instance of the admirable protection of divine Providence over certain chosen souls as well as over the Monastery.

Born in the same year, 1780, Miss Dougherty in the city of New York, Miss McLoughlin at Rivière du Loup, (below Quebec), deprived till the age of fifteen, by the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed, of the inestimable happiness of making their first Communion, they met in the Ursuline Convent to perform that great act, and, at the age of twenty, pronounced the vows of religion before the same altar, in the year 1800.

The talents of both were of a superior order, and the facilities afforded each for the cultivation of her mind were altogether peculiar, and seem really providential when viewed in relation to the duties that awaited them as Ursulines.

Miss Elizabeth Dougherty had been tenderly and piously cared for, from her infancy, by her mother, who was a native of the city of New York and a Protestant. At the age of eleven or twelve, she visited London and Paris, in company with her parents, and her voyage was not lost upon her, either for the information of her mind or the polish of her manners. Bereaved of his wife shortly after his return from Europe, Mr. Dougherty solaced himself with the society of his little daughter, continuing to direct her studies in

grammar, history, arithmetic and geography. From these to astronomy, from earth to the skies, the transition is natural. The rudiments of French and Latin were a necessity, according to his views, for his own education was classical and his tastes literary.

They had been the cause of his voluntary exile from his native land, where the penal laws suffered no Catholic to rise above the soil on which he trod.

What particular motive led Mr. Dougherty to come to Quebec is not explained; in all probability it was the same that had driven him from New York to travel during the first years of the American Republic: the desire to preserve the allegiance he had sworn as a British subject. The position he occupied here appears to have been that of an office-holder under the local government. Elizabeth was at once placed under the care of the Ursulines. The course of religious instruction in preparation for her first Communion made a profound impression upon her, for she was of an age to appreciate more fully than a child of ten or eleven the sublime favor to which she aspired. From this period she dated her first attraction to the religious state. The vivid sense of her immense obligations to Heaven, the firm determination to observe her baptismal vows, and to preserve the white robe of innocence bestowed anew in the sacraments she had just received, inspired her with the utmost contempt of the world, and an ardent desire to give herself all to Him who had given Himself to her as a pledge of eternal life.

At eighteen years of age, Miss Dougherty, who had spent three years in our classes, entered the novitiate (1798), the novice-mistress being Mother Davanne of St. Louis de Gonzague.

Another young lady, Miss Mary Louisa McLoughlin, as we have said, although born of Catholic parents living in Canada, had also deferred her first Communion till she was fifteen years of age. She was a grand-niece of that Colonel Fraser who commanded the regiment of Scotch Highlanders at the taking of Quebec in 1759. Our readers perceive that already the convent is winning members from the ranks of the conquerors. John Malcolm Fraser, brother of the Colonel, had married twice, and the daughters of his second wife, who was a Catholic, followed the religion of their mother. Mary Louisa, the little grand-daughter, was six years old when she first appeared in the house of the old soldier. He was so charmed with her childish attractions that he declared she should not return with her parents to Rivière-du-Loup, and almost by force, retained her as his adopted child. She would be the light of the household in his declining years, and inherit more largely than her family in the property at Rivière du Loup, which belonged to him as a retired officer of the British Army.

Mr. and Mrs. McLoughlin were not without solicitude for the faith of their child; especially when they found her, as she grew older, attending the Sunday services with her grandfather, and going to a Protestant school instead of the convent. Although Mrs. Fraser profited of every opportunity to instruct the child in the Catholic religion, according to the earnest request of both father and mother, yet it must be allowed, it was not without great peril to the faith in which she had been baptized, that Miss McLoughlin grew up without participating in the life-giving sacraments of the Church. At length, her own reflections convinced her that she could no longer remain a mere spectator of what others were doing "to gain eternal life." She felt that religion, that vital question on which depends the fate of an immortal soul,



could not be treated as a matter of taste, or fashion, or convenience. She was not too young to consider seriously the path before her.

On the one hand, she had relatives, friends and acquaintances belonging to the first ranks of society, who professed the various creeds that had made their appearance in the country. On the other hand, she was fully convinced on that fundamental point, the unerring teaching of the Church of Christ against which "the gates of hell shall never prevail." A decision in conformity with her convictions followed; after which, a course of religious instruction, prepared her for the great act of professing the Catholic Faith<sup>1</sup>. This ceremony took place in the chapel of the Seminary of Quebec, in presence of the Superior M. Gravé de la Rive, V. G., and of the young lady's father, Mr. John McLoughlin. Passing over in silence the storm raised by the disappointed Colonel on this occasion, we follow with pleasure the footsteps of this predestined soul, as she obeys the impulse of grace, soliciting first permission to enter the convent as boarder, and later, when her pious meditations have convinced her of the will of Heaven in her regard, arming herself with true Christian courage, in order to execute a project capable of drawing upon her family very serious consequences, as far as regarded their temporal prosperity. This new resolve was "to make her calling and election sure," by embracing the religious state. Placing her trust in Him for whom alone such sacrifices ought to be made, the great step was taken,

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1—Miss McLoughlin's instructor on this important occasion was the noble French exile, the Abbé Philippe Desjardins, at that time chaplain of the Hôtel Dieu. On his return to Paris, he was appointed Vicar General. He never lost sight of his interesting pupil, but corresponded with her by letter till within a few months of his death, 1833.

with the consent of her parents, not less generous than their daughter, while the irascible relative was absent on a journey. His terrible wrath was again appeased, and thus it became an authenticated fact, that there beat in the breast of the veteran of former battles a forgiving heart, capable of relenting on proper occasions, incapable, at least, of committing a manifest injustice by attempting to constrain that free-will which it has pleased the Almighty to bestow on His intelligent creatures.

The ceremony of Miss McLoughlin's taking the veil, on the 27th of February, 1798, was preceded by a rite rarely reserved for such an occasion. The Bishop was there to administer, first, the sacrament of Confirmation: thus the plenitude of the gifts of the Holy Ghost filled her soul, at the important moment of her enlisting under the glorious banner of St. Ursula. Two years later (1800), in the joy of their hearts overflowing with gratitude and love, the two happy novices whom we have brought before our readers, consummated their sacrifice by pronouncing their final vows.

Here we behold the two English teachers, to whom were confided the first regular classes in that language. The time was past when English-speaking pupils were content to learn French only, in the convent; nor could the French pupils afford to be ignorant of the English language. Forty years had multiplied the English portion of the population of Quebec, and had given them schools of their own, to which the pupils of the convent would have been tempted to resort, had they not already acquired a sufficient knowledge of the language.

Mother St. Augustine and her companion, Mother McLoughlin of St. Henry, were prepared to make their classes interesting and profitable. The former, as we have seen, had

received lessons from her father ; the latter was initiated into the popular sciences by her friend and spiritual father, l'Abbé Desjardins.

In the study of geography, the terrestrial globe was now displayed, maps were shown and the pupils taught to copy them ; gleams of general history and astronomy lent their aid. Within the novitiate, other teachers were forming, as if in the prospect of a wider course of studies ; while divine Providence was preparing to reinforce the staff of English teachers by the vocation of Miss Genevieve McKutcheon and Miss Margaret Cuddy, known later as Mothers St. Helen and St. Athanasius.

If the services of Mothers St. Henry and St. Augustine were chiefly required for teaching English, they were not less qualified for the French classes. In painting, drawing, and embroidery Mother St. Augustine excelled ; yet these external accomplishments were of little value in the esteem of either, compared with one moment of recollection and prayer. To develop the religious sentiment—that sentiment which elevates the soul while it enlarges the mind—was, above all, the object these true Ursulines had in view in the care they bestowed upon their pupils.

But the two novices who had met from points so far distant were not destined to continue their career together many years. Employed exclusively in teaching, as long as her health permitted, Mother St. Augustine was placed at the head of the novitiate, in 1812, as a comparative repose. But already her days were numbered. Death had marked her for his victim, and in the springtide of 1814, like some fair fruit, ripe before its time and suddenly harvested by one rude blast, Mother St. Augustine, struck down by a violent malady, found in the bosom of her God an early rest and

an endless reward for her pure and holy life. She was but thirty-five years of age.

Of Mother St. Henry's piety, her energy, her promptitude in obeying the voice of duty, our readers have formed an opinion by what they have already seen of her. Not less remarkable was her alacrity in the observance of the rule while her lightsome countenance was ever expressive of interior joy and cheerfulness. The message sent by her former tutor, the Abbé Desjardins, was well understood, when writing from Paris he advised "Sister St. Augustine to try to prevent Sister St. Henry from laughing."

The day came however, all too soon for her desires, when the cares that devolve upon those who are charged with the principal offices may have moderated the buoyancy of her youthful spirits. Ten years had not yet elapsed after her profession, when she was appointed mother-mistress, with the obligation of guiding others in the path in which she was herself waiking with such fervor. Her days of repose were already past. From the novitiate called to the depository, and thence to the charge of Superior, Mother St. Henry filled these offices alternately during more than a quarter of a century. Her zeal for the instruction of youth, her enlightened views of education, her numerous friends in the highest ranks of society as well as among the clergy, the concurrence of her devoted brothers, the Doctors McLoughlin in all her plans, and their generosity in sending her from Paris, where one of them resided, whatever would be useful to her in the schools<sup>1</sup>;

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1.—Globes, maps, a celestial planisphere, useful and interesting games, were among the presents, received by Mother St. Henry, from her devoted brother Dr. David McLaughlin, who lived in Paris.

This brother had married Lady Jane Capel, niece of the Viceroy of Ireland, and was on friendly terms with Lord Aylmer and Lord Gosford, previous to their appointment to the office of Governor of Canada.

such were some of the peculiar circumstances that rendered her administration a double blessing to the community in the important labors assigned to her direction as Superior. Bishop Plessis, who had received the episcopal consecration about the same time as Mother St. Henry had made profession, seconded all her efforts to introduce a wider course of studies, and manifested on every occasion the highest esteem both for her and for the whole community.

If our readers are aware of what Bishop Plessis was towards his clergy, among his people, or in his intercourse with strangers, they may form an opinion of what Mother St. Henry was in her community, among the pupils and the many strangers who called to see her at the parlor or who obtained permission to visit the interior of the monastery. It was often remarked that the motherly kindness with which she greeted all who approached her, seemed to be still more tender towards strangers, or towards those who were in need of compassion or assistance.

In 1836, Mother St. Henry, completing the fourth term of her superiority, saw herself again placed at the depository, and successively in the other chief offices where her experience could be made available to the community. The end of her useful career was announced by a painful malady, which, after affording occasion for the practice of every virtue, and the triumph of her invariable patience, was crowned by a peaceful and happy death on the third of July, 1846.

The following tribute to the memory of the dear deceased, appeared on the *Quebec Gazette*.

"Died, on Friday, the third instant, at the Convent of the Ursulines of Quebec, Rev. Mother St. Henry (Mary Louisa McLoughlin), at the age of sixty-six years. During the long period of forty-six years of religious profession, she filled at various times the office of Superior of the commu-

nity, with that rare talent, prudence and justice which merited for her the highest confidence and esteem. She will be long and deeply regretted, not only by the citizens of Quebec, of every class and nationality, who have so often rendered homage to her virtues and fine qualities, but also by all those strangers who have had occasion to visit that estimable institution, none of whom ever went away without expressing the highest admiration for the noble manners and the interesting conversation of this amiable lady."

Numerous letters, written by her hand have been preserved, furnishing undoubted proof of her capacity for business and of her mental culture, as well as of the rare qualities of her heart. Among the mourners who wept by her bedside at the hour of separation, were her three nieces, Mothers Josephine Michaud of St. Cecile, Marie Talbot of St. Margaret and Emilie Dechène of St. François de Borgia. A sister of the latter had preceded her aunt to the tomb only four years after the day of her profession.

Mother St. Henry's portrait is one of the few we have the good fortune to possess of our former Superiors. It was executed by an artist, Mr. Bowman, at the special request of her brother, Dr. McLoughlin. It is so life-like that we who bear the original impressed upon our hearts, may still imagine, as we pause before it in the community-hall, that we really meet again those eyes ever beaming with charity, and that we hear the mellow tones of that voice so soothing and maternal which we loved so well.

Often has it been remarked of Mother St. Henry, that it was sufficient to have seen her once to remain impressed with the highest respect for her as a religious, and at the same time attracted by the charm of her conversation, her presence, her manners, all denoting the accomplished lady whose mind was even superior to her exterior endowments.

## CHAPTER XIII

## SISTER-NOVICES OF MOTHERS ST. HENRY AND ST. AUGUSTINE

The novitiate, in a religious house, represents, in some degree, the family-circle. Presided by a mother-mistress whose office is truly maternal, since to her is confided the trust of forming the character of her youthful charge, teaching them to walk in the narrow path of perfection, and preparing each to become the spouse of Christ; composed of souls yet in the infancy of the spiritual life, whose daily growth in holiness is often rapid and clearly perceptible, mutual confidence and mutual edification establish relations truly fraternal, and impart to sister-novices a family resemblance which often lasts as long as their lives.

For this reason we love to bring before us from time to time, a group of those Mothers who have commenced their religious career together, persuaded that when we have studied the character of one or two, we have, in a measure, the portrait of the others. Hence, having dwelt at some length, on the memory of Sister McLoughlin of St. Henry and Sister Dougherty of St. Augustine, the briefest notice of their sister-novices will suffice.

The amiable *senior* of the novitiate in the year 1800 was Mother Angélique La Ferrière of St. Mary, so well known in later times, whether as mistress-general of the boarders, assistant-superior, or mistress of novices. In each of these offices the rare qualities of mind and heart with which Mother St. Mary was endowed endeared her to all who were committed to her care and guidance; all found in her a mother's solicitude and tenderness, whether in preparing for

their duties in society and in the family-circle, or in pursuing the narrow path of perfection in the religious state.

It was in the fiftieth year of her profession and in the seventy-third of her age, that the beloved Mother was called to exchange her labors for an immortal crown. A brief malady found her ready for the great summons, but her sisters ill-prepared to part with her. The friend who had ever words of encouragement and consolation at her command, the zealous promoter of education and improvement, whether in our classes or among her novices; the fervent religious, rich in all the virtues of her state: such was the dear Mother whose loss the community was called to deplore, in the month of January, 1847.

Next in rank of profession is Mother Elizabeth Blais of St. Monica, who, apparently, entered the House of God only in the hope of finding it speedily the "Gate of Heaven." Eight years sufficed to win, in answer to her prayers, the possession of the eternal crown; and it seemed wrong to weep for one who bade adieu to life without one sigh, one fear, or one regret.

Mother Louise Olivier of St. Paul, and Mother Margaret Coutant of St. Anne, gave their quarter of a century to the humble and laborious life of an Ursuline; they merited to be held in esteem for their charitable and edifying conversation. Both were rewarded for a holy life by a happy death in the course of the year 1826.

Mother Marie-Françoise Aubin of St. Anthony, sister novice with the two preceding, doubled their career, joining them in a better world in 1852.

To all who knew Mother St. Anthony, she appeared the personification of humility, self-forgetfulness and charity. To aid another Sister in office, to wait upon the feeble or ailing, to accomplish to the letter the successive duties



marked out by the rule or by the appointment of her Superior, such was the aim and the delight of this good Mother. But an office for which she had a special affection was the care of the sick, with the night-watching and helpful services needed in the last stages of a mortal disease. And when the spirit had fled and the death-chamber was silent, how tender and how devout was her vigil beside the dear casket, although rifled of the dearer pearl it once enclosed. At other hours, among her Sisters in the community, none were more entertaining in conversation than Mother St. Anthony. Her fund of anecdotes, chiefly tales of the olden times and of the Mothers who had gone, seemed inexhaustible. Her end came all peacefully at the age of sixty-eight years. A few months more would have given her the occasion of celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of her consecration as the spouse of Christ. May we not piously believe that such anniversaries are still more joyfully celebrated in heaven ?

The twin sisters, Marie Louise and Marie Thérèse Oneille, bearing in religion the names of St. Gertrude and St. Catherine, were ever "burning and shining lights" by their angelic life. It was in favor of the Irish class in the extern school that the amiable Mother St. Catherine put to profit the facility she had acquired in speaking English, in which she displayed an eloquence, a pathos, which many a sacred orator might envy. Her instructions doubtless owed their efficacy to that ardent love of God with which her heart was on fire, for, on these occasions, she seemed inspired. Her death, in 1842, preceded by an illness of only three days, filled the convent with grief. So sudden a stroke found no one prepared, but the dear soul who so submissively accepted it as the signal of her eternal happiness. The recitation of the Divine Office on that memorable 28th May was nigh being interrupted ;

and at the dinner hour on the following day, no one could command her emotion sufficiently to read during the meal, as is the custom.

Oh! how we pitied that other sister, Mother St. Gertrude, nor thought she could survive the separation. But, as some one has said, "grief seldom breaks a heart." The tender ties of nature had been strengthened by forty years of their religious life spent together; death could not burst them asunder. One had merely gone before; the other would wait the hour to follow; and so she peacefully, silently bears her cross and follows on in the narrow path as before. Ten years later (1852), that fragile frame, after undergoing long and severe sufferings, set free, at last, the willing, the pure, the blessed spirit.

The choir of Virgins pure and bright,  
Around their sister press'd,  
And hymns of welcome sweet they sang—  
"Come, weary one and rest!"

The merits of Mother St. Athanasius and her long labors were known, we might say, to all the Irish population of Quebec and its environs. She was born in Kilkenny and came out to this country when but a child; her father, who belonged to the military, died almost on their arrival. Kind friends provided for the widow and the child. Little Margaret was placed at the convent, at the age of fourteen, by one who hoped that when she had grown up, he would be found to suit her choice. But the young girl took her decision in the calm of her heart, bestowing its affections on a heavenly Spouse. Sending for her protector, she informed him of her intention to ask admission among the daughters of St. Angela.

It is related that, waiving his claims in a truly Christian spirit, the young officer used neither reproach nor entreaty

to dissuade the chosen one from following the call of Heaven. A few months later, in presence of "men and angels," Miss Cuddy proclaimed her intention of "persevering until the end of her life in bearing the sweet yoke of Jesus Christ," and exchanged her name for that of St. Athanasius, while she received the veil and vesture of an Ursuline. Thus, at sixteen, commenced a long and useful career of more than three-score years within the cloister.

Possessing a ready memory, an ardent temperament, a warm Irish heart, she loved next after God her country and all that belonged to the green ISLE OF ERIN. To the latest day of her life, she remembered with vivid emotion her native land. Charged with the Irish children at the extern-school from the time it was opened (1822), she spared neither labor nor pains to contribute to the "spiritual and temporal welfare of all who came within her influence. As a teacher she was indefatigable, holding the reins of government with a firm yet even hand. Her politeness was proverbial; she no less insisted that her pupils should in all things conform to the rules of good breeding; and if refined manners contribute in no small degree to the well-being of the family circle and of society in general, in this respect also, the name of Mother St. Athanasius claims a tribute of gratitude.

We omit with regret much that would charm and edify in the life of this venerable nun, who after celebrating her Diamond Jubilee left her place vacant among us in 1875, dying at the age of eighty-five. We can merely mention Mother McKutcheon of St. Helen, whose name, even during her life-time, was esteemed synonymous with that of *Saint*. Long infirmities, borne with the patience of one who habitually contemplates the Crucifix, did not prevent her from discharging the duties of teacher, and especially that of

mistress of novices, with notable success. An unction, as sweet as it was penetrating, pervaded her words, which ever made a deep impression, whether in simple conference with her novices, or in addressing collectively her little flock. It was in 1862, while the community was engaged in the exercises of an annual retreat, that our beloved Mother St. Helen, aged seventy-two, closed in peace her earthly career.

She, who had been the third English-speaking novice received in the monastery, left twelve teachers of that language, yet not one too many for the ever increasing demands of the institution.

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## CHAPTER XIV

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### CONVENT EDUCATION SINCE 1800

Catholic institutions for education in Canada had found in the policy of the government inaugurated in 1759 difficulties to which we have briefly alluded elsewhere. At the beginning of the present century, these institutions were far from the high position which they have at last attained throughout the land. Among the mass of the population especially, the scale of instruction had evidently descended. It would be an interesting study, to trace the gradual rise of our convent-teaching, from that simple, yet fundamental course including Christian doctrine and sacred history, reading, writing, arithmetic, and needle-work, to which it was mostly confined eighty or ninety years ago, to the wider circle it embraces at the present day.

By comparing the notes furnished by our annals, it is evident that the impetus given to studies about the year 1800, both in the novitiate and in the classes, by the well-directed efforts of Mother St. Henry and St. Augustine, was but the first wave of a new and powerful current, which without tearing up the solid bed of a time-worn channel, began to flow more swiftly, imparting fresh verdure and plentiful flowers along its pleasant banks.

Already in 1810 "pupils commenced to be more numerous, and to remain longer at school." In 1815, Bishop Plessis regulated "that more time should be allotted to the studies of the novices, in order to render them proficient in the various branches which they were required to teach, French and English grammar, geography, &c. "These branches, adds the annalist, attract pupils to the convent, and afford us an opportunity to form them to the virtues of a Christian life."

Half-boarders had been admitted from the year 1800. Their class-rooms were distinct from those of the boarders until 1825, when the two schools were united, in order to afford greater facility for grading the classes, according to the rule." To the new branches already introduced were added history and translation. The number of boarders varied from sixty to eighty: the half-boarders were in greater number.

The extern-school had never ceased to be numerous. In 1822, Rev. J. Signay, parish priest of Quebec, applied to the Ursulines to obtain instruction for the Irish Catholics of the city. We may judge what zeal animated our Mothers of that period by the fact that they received sixty of these young girls immediately, although they were obliged to admit them while the French pupils were absent, from eleven

o'clock to one, in order to have class-rooms. Many of these children being very poor, had to be supplied with the nourishment of the body as well as that of the soul.

The Irish class was definitively organized, and opened to the scholars at the same hours as the French Canadians, in 1824. Between seventy and eighty children assembled, at once, to receive elementary instruction in English, under the devoted superintendence of Mother St. Athanasius, whose name became a household-word with the Irish, during her long and laborious services in the extern-school.

While our nuns were thus imposing upon themselves new labors, a wider and higher course of studies in the solid as well as in the ornamental branches, was being elaborated.

Mother Dougherty of St. Augustine had formed excellent pupils, especially in drawing; among these Mother Julie Painchaud of St. Borgia rivalled and even surpassed her teacher. During the eighteen years of her too brief career, she was employed exclusively in the boarding-school, where she succeeded no less in forming her youthful charge to piety and good manuers than in cultivating their talents and ornamenting their minds<sup>1</sup>. Musical instruments were not unknown, in some of their simpler forms, even in the early times of the convent<sup>2</sup>.

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1—The first lessons in crayon and in oil-painting were received from a French artist in 1820. Twelve years later, Mr. Bowman, a painter of distinction from Boston, was employed with such success that the principal altars and shrines within the Monastery were soon decorated with paintings due to his pupils.

2—The piano-forte was introduced by a friend of the convent, Mr. J. B. Glackmeyer. Regular lessons were first given to the pupils by Mr. Codman, the organist of the Anglican cathedral.

In 1824, there were novices qualified to give music-lessons, and some ten years later, secular teachers were no longer required for any instrument, the organ, harp and guitar included.

The next fifteen years presented a concurrence of circumstances singularly favorable to the complete development of a higher course of studies. Throughout the country there was the awakening of a new interest in the cause of education. A society under the patronage of the Governor and approved by the Bishop, to further that cause, first organized in 1820, became every day more popular and acquired new importance.

As regards more directly the Convent, there were the united efforts of able and energetic Superiors both ecclesiastical and monastic, of devoted friends among the clergy, particularly the priests of the Seminary, of accomplished teachers. Among these we must specify, in addition to those already mentioned, Mother Cecilia O'Conway of the Incarnation, who after being a Sister of Charity in New York, became an Ursuline, by joining our community in 1823.

Carefully educated by her father, who was a linguist and a man of extensive learning, Mother Cecilia of the Incarnation had acquired also a fund of useful information by experience, before giving her services to the monastery of the Ursulines. To a natural taste for those sciences which in our century have become so popular, botany, physics, mineralogy, &c., she joined uncommon skill in all the varieties of fancy work and embroidery. Active and energetic, she possessed all that love for teaching, that sympathy for her pupils, that zeal for their progress, so necessary to form a successful instructor.

About the same date opened an intimate and cordial intercourse by letter with the Ursuline Convent of St. Mary's,

Waterford (Ireland), recently founded by the Ursulines of Cork. Through the kindness of these highly educated sister-Ursulines, the classes were provided with excellent treatises and models of literature, in English ; specimens of natural history and curiosities sufficient to form the germ of a museum, which every year has augmented down to the present day.

In 1831, commenced that series of modern improvements, by additions to the original buildings, which have continued from time to time during almost a half-century <sup>1</sup>.

The appointment of Rev. Thomas Maguire as chaplain won for the convent the services of that eminent friend of education, for the consolidation of the new plan of studies and the spiritual direction of the community. A voyage to Europe (1834-36) afforded him an opportunity to visit various educational institutions, and to purchase instruments, with stores of books, curiosities, &c., for the Ursulines, to whose interests he was to devote himself during the nineteen remaining years of his life.

Returning to Canada by the way of New York, in 1835, our good Father was requested by the Bishop of Boston to be the conductor of the remaining members of the convent of Charlestown, Mass., a part of whom had already sought protection in the Old Monastery of Quebec. Driven from

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1—A new story, added to the main building, gave two large halls, and four smaller class-rooms for the better accommodation of the boarders. These were solemnly blessed with pious rejoicings on the 15th of Oct., 1832, by Bishop Signay. After the ceremony, Lady Aylmer, attended only by the ladies of her suite, the governor being absent, paid a gracious visit to the pupils in their new class-rooms. The same day, other ladies of the city, the parents and relatives of the pupils, enjoyed also that rare privilege of viewing the interior of the Monastery, permission having been given to that effect.



their peaceful home at midnight, August 13th, 1834, by a heartless, deluded mob, they had failed in obtaining redress at the hands of justice, before the tribunals of Massachusetts, and they were now, though with reluctance, abandoning the work of benevolence to which they had desired to consecrate their lives.

When the final arrangements had been made, permitting the Ursuline convents of Three Rivers and New Orleans to share the services of these worthy nuns, two of them gratefully accepted the dispositions of divine Providence which assigned to them, as their future home, the house founded by the Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation. Thus were acquired the services of Mother Elizabeth Harrison of St. Joseph, an excellent religious, and a musician in the style of Saint Cecilia, under whose thrilling touch

.....the pealing organ swelled,  
Filling the soul with thoughts divine.

By another member of the Charlestown convent, Mother Mary Barber of St. Benedict, the teaching of the English language, already thoroughly organized within the monastery, was placed on the same basis as the French, a standard which it has never since ceased to maintain.

Among the motives of encouragement, and the stimulants to exertion in the cause of education, during the years we are now considering, justice as well as gratitude would lead us to mention the high patronage, the friendliness and good will of the Governors of Canada and their noble families. At all times, a new Governor's visit to the Ursuline Convent, has seemed to follow as naturally his arrival as any another ceremony of his installation. The New-Year's visit to the

Ursuline Convent was as much a rule of etiquette at the Castle, as the New-Year's ball offered to the citizens.

More frequent and more intimate were the visits of Her Ladyship and the children. Lady Provost and her daughter, the Countess Dalhousie, as well as Lady Aylmer, were personal friends of the nuns, seeking occasions to enjoy their society, taking interest in the amusements of the pupils or their success in their studies. More than once, the presentation of a chart, a rare print or drawing, or some other object useful for teaching, would follow the examination of a class, at which one of these kind ladies had presided. Lady Aylmer's friendly visits (1830-34) in the class-rooms and the emulation they excited will never be forgotten <sup>1</sup>.

Alternately with the presence of the Governor, of the Lady of the Castle, it was the annual or the occasional visit of the chief Pastor of the diocese that awakened new zeal and encouraged to new efforts for the good cause.

Let our readers judge of this by an extract from a letter addressed to the community by Reverend P.-F. Turgeon, charged by Bishop Signay with the direction of the Monastery <sup>2</sup>.

"Since several years, writes the new Superior in 1833, your educational department has acquired an importance highly gratifying to all the friends of religion. The efforts

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1—"In April, 1831, *Milady Aylmer*, writes the annalist, accompanied by several ladies of the city, honored our boarders so far as to assist at the examination of the higher classes, and expressed herself extremely satisfied with their answers. The examination lasted three hours. Her Ladyship had the goodness to present crowns of roses to the two that had most distinguished themselves, and to bestow the Cross of St. Louis upon two others for their application. The cross was worn several days, according to our custom at these examinations."

2—Later, Archbishop of Quebec.

you have made to place your boarding-school on the respectable footing it now occupies, are viewed with admiration. All classes of society rejoice to see, that in addition to the good education you have heretofore given, you have introduced several branches of learning, which, although they may not be of great practical utility, have one great advantage, that of enabling young girls to complete their education in the convent where their religious instruction will ever be kept in view. Pious mothers esteem themselves happy to be exempted from the necessity of placing in secular hands the treasures they confide to yours without anxiety.

"I feel a lively satisfaction in perceiving that piety and virtue distinguish the pupils of your institution, etc."

Another appreciation of the education given sixty years ago in the convent may not be uninteresting. We shall take it from the newspaper account of an altogether unprecedented visit to the Ursulines<sup>1</sup>. The great hall St. Ursula had been ornamented for the occasion, and the pupils had prepared for a little dramatic entertainment in view of the reception offered to the most distinguished assembly that Quebec could afford. The Right Reverend J. Signay, Bishop of Quebec, attended by several members of the clergy, and a large number of gentlemen of the laity, all most respectable by their character

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1—The Ursulines, counting upon an indemnity for the loss of their property in France, had contracted debts in repairing the boarding-school. At the same time the old building that served for the externs was crumbling and needed restoration.

In such circumstances, they applied for pecuniary aid from the Legislature and received the sum of \$2000. It was an opportunity of which these Honorable Gentlemen took advantage to testify their desire of visiting the institution.

and position, had been introduced within the cloister on the 14th of January, 1836. On the following day the subjoined account appeared on the newspaper *Le Canadien* <sup>1</sup>.

"Yesterday afternoon, the Hon. Speaker and members of the Legislature were admitted to visit the Ursuline Convent of this city. The pupils of the institution represented, in presence of this honorable company, a sacred drama, which alone would suffice to give the highest idea of the classical education young ladies receive in this pious institution. Specimens of painting, drawing and needlework, in all their varieties, which these gentlemen had an opportunity to examine, raised their admiration to the highest degree and all were enchanted with the gracefulness of the pupils, as well as the affability of the ladies to whose zealous and enlightened care they are confided."

The culminating point, as regards the efforts made in Canada to encourage education and render it popular, was the introduction of public examinations. The experiment had been tried at the Seminary of Quebec in 1830 and the following years with full success. In 1837, the pupils of the Ursulines, for the first time, presented themselves before an audience assembled at the invitation of their convent mothers, to be examined on the different branches they had studied.

It was on the 31st of January. Father Thomas Maguire had offered for the occasion "the chaplain's room" not more spacious at that time than at the present day. At one end was the Bishop's chair, with seats for some twenty priests who had been invited. The other extremity of the apart-

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1—Of which M. Etienne Parent was then editor.

ment was arranged for a class of young ladies with maps and globes; the black-board for the grammar-class, for arithmetic and tracing maps; composition-books, written by the pupils; specimens of their painting, drawing and embroidery, suspended on the walls.

There was also a piano awaiting the well-trained fingers of young musicians, while the harp displayed its fine proportions, and guitars, their graceful forms. About one hundred pupils were in readiness in the adjoining apartments, to enter, one class at a time, to be examined. The programmes and question-lists on the various branches, were in the hands of Father Maguire, who invited, in turn, the *cure* of Quebec, Rev. C. F. Baillargeon, Rev. P. McMahon of St. Patrick's church, or some other clergyman, to test the proficiency of the young students. The morning session was from nine o'clock to eleven; in the afternoon, it lasted from two to four o'clock, during three successive days, the more serious labor of the examination being diversified by the occasional recitation of a fable, a poem or a dialogue, by music and singing, or by the reading of an original composition.

At the opening of the last session, the apparatus of a school-room had disappeared. A king's throne and tapestried walls transported the spectators to a palace: it was that of Assuerus, the Assyrian monarch, as depicted by Racine in his tragedy of *Esther*. The *dramatis personæ* succeeded in fully interesting their audience; but they were in turn even more interested, themselves, and we write here from personal recollections, when the names of the successful competitors in the arena of science being proclaimed, they came forward to receive, at the hands of the good bishop, the modest, yet much-prized testimonial, a wreath of flowers or a book inscribed with their name.

A valedictory address, a few complimentary and encouraging words from the venerable prelate and others who had presided, and the examination exercises were over. They had passed off to the entire satisfaction of all parties concerned.

The following year, the large hall in the new building which bears the name of Ste. Angèle, was opened to a similar audience ; but another concession was now demanded. Parents were only half satisfied to know that their daughters had done themselves credit by passing a good examination ; they must witness it themselves. The question having been carried before competent authority and decided in favor of the petitioners, in 1839, the exercises took place in presence of the parents, guardians and sisters of the pupils. The Bishop with the clergy of the city, judges and other friends of education, continued to form the " Board of Examiners " at the sessions of Wednesday and Thursday (January 30th and 31st), which were held in the same large hall that had been occupied the preceding year. The Mother Superior and a certain number of the nuns, from an adjoining apartment, could see the pupils as they presented themselves before the audience and superintend the proceedings.

The programme of the examination of which we here subjoin a summary, shows the extent of the course of studies in 1839 :

Pupils, one hundred and six (the little juniors not included).  
Four classes examined.

Studies :—French and English Grammar, Arithmetic, Geography, History of England, Roman History, Translation, Rhetoric, French and English Compositions in prose and verse ; elements of Astronomy, Botany and Mineralogy including Physics and Chemistry, with experiments.

The programme was varied with vocal and instrumental music, the piano, harp and guitar.

On the tables were displayed specimens of writing, drawing and painting, needlework and embroidery.

The third session closed with the Drama, *CORIOLANUS*, and the DISTRIBUTION OF PRIZES.

Some changes and improvements have naturally been called for, in the course of the past fifty years; the most striking are those which regard the examination of the pupils. These exercises being no longer performed in presence of a public audience, are only the more serious and efficacious as well as more congenial to the taste and feelings both of teachers and pupils.

In closing these rather desultory remarks on the subject of education in the Convent, we cannot refrain from mentioning again the immense obligations of the community towards the Bishop of Quebec.

If, in the course of the preceding pages, the paternal solicitude of the chief Pastors of the diocese for all the inmates of the Monastery, has appeared, on every occasion that regarded their welfare temporal or spiritual, what shall we say of their judicious and enlightened zeal in promoting the principal object of the institution, the education of young girls? that education which must never lose sight of its twofold object, preparing at once useful members of society, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

Although the few extracts we have given from the pastoral exhortations addressed to the community by our worthy prelates and ecclesiastical Superiors, are sufficient to show how much the true interests of the institution have been forwarded by the Episcopal jurisdiction, yet we reserve for a future page, some further interesting details.

## CHAPTER XV

1831

## THE OLD BELFRY—THE CONVENT-BELLS

An animated and novel scene diversified the environs of the monastery on the 12th of July, 1831. The convent-grounds had been invaded by a company of laborers and carpenters, in the midst of whom appeared the architect, with Rev. Jérôme Demers, of the Quebec Seminary, and the aged *Père* Daulé, Chaplain of the Ursulines.

Already the roof of the main building has been scaled ; heavy blows make the shingles fly, the boards and rafters shiver. But the centre of interest for all, just now, is the belfry and its cross surmounted spire. That cross, with its arms pointed by the fleur-de-lis, is a relic of ancient times, and when tottering on its base, it is seen descending, many eyes are fixed upon it with affection, as upon something precious. At length, it lies prostrate on the ground, and beside it, the bell that had swung beneath for the space of one hundred and forty years.

But is not this a wanton desecration of old things, as uncalled for as it is unprecedented ? Gentle reader, do not think we shall readily admit such a supposition. Veneration for all that comes down to us from our "ancient Mothers" would willingly have preserved that antique belfry, which gave so monastic a look to the Ursuline convent. But the imperious demand for more room, on account of the pupils, that interesting population ever in greater numbers flocking in, had been taken into consideration. A third story, to be raised upon the foundation-walls built by Venerable Mother Marie de l'Incarnation, was resolved upon and served as



a model of all the succeeding improvements which in the space of another half-century would be called for.

Leaving the workmen to continue their labors, let us join the group of nuns and pupils, who on that summer evening, when the grounds are again clear of men, surround the piles of fragments, and testing in playful mood the nearer sound of the bell, question of its past history. Is this the first bell that our Mothers ever had? Is it the same that used to ring so musically, calling the neophytes to the waters of baptism, or the newly-made Christians to Holy Mass? Is it that bell which Madame de la Peltrie rang so often, as well as Mother St. Joseph and Sister St. Laurent? Alas, no; that favored bell was not long-lived. It melted in the memorable fire of the 31st December, 1650, and, according to old records, ungratefully threatened the life of the Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation, as she passed with intrepid step through the long corridor.

Is it then that other bell which, some years later, swung in the belfry of Madame de la Peltrie's church, and which tolled so sadly at the two successive funerals of 1671 and 1672; funerals that left the nuns in sad mourning, bereaved of their tender mothers?

No, once more, no! A second conflagration put an end

“To the swinging and the ringing”

of that bell also. But the convent rises again from its ruins, and this time, the kind hand of charity provides a bell which is destined to outlive its belfry. It was the gift of Madame du Tronchet, a French lady who was ever on the watch to oblige the Ursulines of Quebec. Solemnly blessed, some years after its reception, the Marquis de Beauharnois and the Marchioness de Vaudreuil being its sponsors, the fortunate Marie-Joseph-Louise-Marguerite was not demolished when

dethroned in 1830, but was placed in due time in the church-steeple beside the other of louder tone. Its clear, yet rather sharp and imperious voice is still heard, alternately with its neighbor's, announcing various hours of the day from four o'clock in the morning to half-past eight at night.

Now, of steeples also there is a story to be told; a semi-tragical incident which occurred in 1754 affords the occasion. There was a violent thunderstorm on that dark December night. The wind blowing a perfect hurricane swept pitilessly over the whole country, unroofing houses, overturning barns and performing other feats, worthy of old Boreas in his worst humor. It shook the Convent tremendously, threatening destruction to every thing less solid than stone walls.

On the following morning, the first sight that greeted the inmates of the cloister was a church without a steeple! The wind had borne it off, bell and all, and left it in ruins on the ground. How it cleared the roof without breaking it in, was a question; but the fact was evident. The cross was a little damaged; the bell not at all. The same hurricane, which had lasted two hours or more, "had unroofed the barn and torn the cloister-gate from its hinges," causing a devastation which, in all, our Mothers estimated at 2000 livres.

Of course, another steeple arose in due time, and again the bell was heard calling to prayer: calling at early hours to awaken the religious, whether in the golden days of summer, when at four o'clock, the sky is so glorious that its sight pays the early riser for coming forth from the most refreshing slumbers; whether in winter,

" In the icy air of night  
While the stars that oversprinkle  
All the heavens, seem to twinkle  
With a cristalline delight."

Ever with undeviating punctuality the bell rings out its solemn peal, calling to prayer, to labor or to repose ; for, within the monastery, that bell is the voice of order and authority ; it is the voice of God !

How joyously it rings to usher in the great festivals as the year goes round ! How cheerful is its tone on that morning when the little band of white-robed communicants, after long preparations for the great day, are admitted for the first time to the table of the Lord !

How glad, yet solemn is the bell that announces to the happy novice, that the hour has come for her to pronounce the " good word," *Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum*, her final divorce from the world.

More solemn, yet not of utter sadness, is that other voice of the convent-bell, telling that a soul has gone forth from her earthly tenement to meet her Creator.

" Yet 'tis not weariness of life  
That makes us wish to die ;  
But we are drawn by cords of love  
To our eternity."

Sometimes we hear it ringing a loud, long and earnest peal, when the cloistered family, nuns and pupils, are already assembled in the choir. Through the air the chime is borne to the whole neighborhood, inviting worshippers to join in spirit or by their presence, at the sacred function, the afternoon Benediction service. " Hasten, it seems to say, hasten ye that are weary and worn with the ungrateful toil of the week. This is the moment when Jesus waits to bless and strengthen you. Come, hasten to adore Him ! "

But let us briefly recount the honors, and the end of that storm-vexed bell, which was precipitated to the ground on a December night, as we have just said.

Purchased for our church—just finished in 1723, it was in the presence of a goodly company that its blessing or *baptism* took place, the sponsors being the Intendant's son, Monsieur Bégon and Miss Elizabeth de Vaudreuil; the officiating clergyman was the Vicar General M. de Varennes. Twenty years after the accident of the storm, from some unknown cause, the mellow tones of the said bell suddenly changed to a tinkling and discordant sound, "as unmusical, says the annalist, as that of an old brass kettle."

It was necessary to provide another, and our Mothers were willing to have one of larger dimensions. Through some mistake in the order, a bell weighing three hundred and fifty pounds was sent: it was heavier than would have been desirable. Blessed with less ceremony than the former, and named *Jean-Olivier* after the good Bishop of the time, its reign was inaugurated in 1774.

Having served during a century without any worse accident than an occasional false turn, or a broken bell-rope, let us wish it a continuation of "its clear and musical voice; although it may still merit the reproach bestowed upon it in its youth, namely, that "it is rather hard to ring."

But another relic of the past has here to be accounted for. There was a cross which had towered aloft over the MONASTERY OF ST. URSULA for such a length of years that its origin is lost in obscurity. Would our readers behold it again? Let them follow, if they may, the long winding alleys of the nuns' garden, till they reach the highest part of the gradually rising ground. Here, a rocky ledge, grass-grown now, and worn, makes a pleasant pathway while the fractures and angles of the rugged limestone, relieved by mosses and

lichens, are enlivened by wild flowers that have outlived the ancient forest. Amid their bloom, stands the old FRENCH CROSS, which once surmounted the belfry over the main building. Its pedestal is itself a relic, being cut from the trunk of the OLD ASH TREE, of historic memory. A rustic arbor, near by, would be at home in the midst of this shrubbery, the elder with its flat corymbs of sweet-scented white flowers, the cranberry and red raspberry-bushes mingling with clusters of golden-rod, buttercups, the star-like white daisy, and fairy-looking campion. The jointed clover and arrow-leaved buckwheat seem to have a mission here, in trailing over the dark-colored rock. The delicate corydalis and wood-sorrel, the dwarf speedwell with its pretty blue flowers—miniature forget-me-nots—remind us of solitary glades and untrodden dells amid the hills, far away from city-life.

Oh! this is the spot to dream of the olden times! This height, which has preserved throughout centuries its primitive vegetation, should bear the foot-prints of the little Indian girls that wandered here, full of strange, new thoughts of the Great Spirit, and all His love for them, after they had listened to the glowing words of Mother Mary of the Incarnation or of Madame de la Peltrie. Here, perhaps, sat dear Mother St. Joseph, with a group of little Huron girls, to whom she was explaining the words of eternal life; and here have strayed, at different hours, all those holy nuns whose lives and examples are our greatest encouragement in the midst of our labors, similar to those for which they are now rewarded.

This height, at the present day, is a favorite haunt, especially in the late afternoon of a summer's Sunday, when the rays of the declining sun are screened off by that protecting line of houses along the street beyond the cloister-wall. On

that day of rest, the evening recreation brings out to enjoy the cooling shade the whole population of the monastery. The pupils have their spacious grounds, bordered and set out with trees; their arcade built on the plan of the ancient cloisters, only of lighter materials; their croquet-grounds, their summer-houses. We, from our station near the "old cross," may hear their merry shouts and calls. They are to our right, in the environs of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce and St. Joseph's, the two modern edifices connected with St. Augustine's, that constitute the department of the boarding-school.

Before us, at the distance of some twenty rods, is the building occupied by the community, the *Holy Family*, built in 1686; its two modern wings, *St. Thomas* and *Marie-de-l'Incarnation*, giving it an aspect massive, and almost severe. Beyond, at the distance of twenty rods more, is a modern structure, the extern school-house replacing *Madame de la Peltrie's house*; while, adjoining the church *St. Ursula* and *St. Angela*, along the street, connect the cloister, on that side, with the outer world.

This garden-field, set with fruit-trees and flowering shrubs, the plum, cherry and apple, the lilac, the mock-orange, and others stretches away to the north and the west of our rustic seat in many a shady walk. Before the arrival of the unneighboring English sparrows, the garden of the Ursulines was the resort of more than twenty species of birds: warblers of various song, sparrows and finches, the social robin, the hungry chatterer, the lively swallow, and weary transient visitors of many a name sought this quiet spot for a few days' rest and refreshment. Even now there remain several of these denizens of the woods to make melody here; but the noise of the city reaches us no more than if we were still sur-

rounded by the wild scenery that formed the landscape two hundred and fifty years ago.

It is a welcome solitude in the midst of a city, a place for study, for musing, for repose ; and even, when we raise our eyes to that CROSS, for prayer :

O CRUX AVE, SPES UNICA !

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## CHAPTER XVI

1832

\* FATHER JEAN DÉNIS DAULÉ

RESIDENCE OF THE CHAPLAIN OF THE URSULINES

During more than a century after the foundation of the monastery, the spiritual direction and service of the community had been for the most part conducted by the good Fathers of the Society of Jesus. But the noble Society founded by St. Ignatius was persecuted in Europe, and in 1776, those indefatigable laborers in the vineyard of the Lord, were treated as " useless servants " ; the Society was suppressed. Here in Canada, by the change of government in 1760, it was doomed to a gradual extinction till, in 1800, these heroic religious had disappeared from the country whose soil, during more than a century and a half, had been fertilized by their toil and the shedding of their blood.

From 1780, the office of chaplain and director was discharged by Monsieur Henri Gravé, Vicar-General and Superior of the Seminary of Quebec, of whose zeal, charity and soli-

citude the annals have kept grateful remembrance. His death in 1801 left again an important vacancy to be filled, while it was evident that with an increase of labor, proportioned to the growing prosperity of the community and the institute, the functions of the double office were no longer consistent with any other regular vocation or duty. Thus, in 1802, Mother Marchand of St. Ursula being Superior, it was decided, with the approval of ecclesiastical authority, that apartments within the monastery, yet distinct from the cloister, should be provided for the chaplain's residence. These were no sumptuous quarters, certainly, and barely sufficient for the domicile of one willing to live a retired and solitary life, to follow a rule in accordance with that of the house, ready at a moment's notice to quit his own occupations in order to exercise his office in the ministration of souls.

The first resident chaplain was Father Antoine Langlois, a holy young priest, who had already since nine or ten years led the life of an anchorite as pastor at the Ile-aux-Coudres. Father Langlois' duties as chaplain of the Ursulines only confirmed his aspirations and longings for the religious life. Four years later he was *en route* for a monastery of Trappists in Kentucky, where in due time he pronounced his vows under the name of Brother Bernard. His successor in the hermitage of the monastery was Father Jean Denis Daulé, one of the French refugees welcomed to Canada, while in 1793 the bloody guillotine was felling by hundreds its victims from the sanctuary.

Father Daulé was born in Paris, and manifested at an early age his ardent piety by seeking admission among the rigid disciples of La Trappe; but the delicate frame of the stripling and his jovial humor were not found suited to that austere order. The same qualities were not incompatible with the



priestly office to which he was ordained in 1790, while the darkened horizon already foreboded the storm destined to ravage the fair land of France, destroying its sanctuaries, deluging with blood the steps both of the throne and the altar.

Among the eight thousand priests, who escaped the massacre which threatened them, by fleeing to England while terror reigned supreme in Paris, some thirty found means to reach Canada. Here the peaceful field of parish or missionary labor was opened to the exiles, and proved as beneficial to the country as it was consoling to themselves.

Father Daulé, one of these illustrious exiles, was appointed chaplain of the monastery in 1806, and continued to discharge the various duties of his office during twenty-six years to the entire satisfaction of the community.

Heaven had bestowed upon this holy priest the gift of a tender piety, which retained its freshness even amid the chills of age and the burden of infirmities. When he discoursed of spiritual things, the unction of his words was irresistible, while his zeal for the welfare of the souls committed to his direction rendered him indefatigable in seeking their perfection. The pupils were won by his gentleness, as the nuns were by his sanctity.

Among the means to promote the piety of the pupils, he employed with success that of associating them to the acts of divine worship, by the singing of hymns and canticles which he had composed and set to music; for Father Daulé was both a poet and a musician. In the isolated life of a parish priest, he had found a companion and a solace in that oft derided yet highly sympathetic instrument, the violin. Under the intelligent fingers of our good chaplain, it seemed a voice from the spirit-land—but a voice of good spirits only—while it accompanied the pious hymns dictated by a heart that felt the force of the double law of charity.

Father Daulé delighted to exercise the pupils to sing at Mass and Benediction, whereas heretofore the nuns had mostly the monopoly of singing, using exclusively the plain-chant of the Church.

As the chaplain's apartments are situated opposite the community, it was not a rare occurrence that the sound of the favorite instrument accompanying the good Father's magnificent voice was heard at the hour when around the monastery all is hushed in the evening silence. The pious accents telling of a holy longing to be with God, a tender invitation to holy Communion, a hymn of thanksgiving or of petition for new graces, could only aid the recollection of that blessed hour which prepares for the night's repose.

Father Daulé at sixty began to feel the infirmities of age ; he was no longer able to fulfil all the duties of his charge. His sight was failing to a degree that threatened total blindness. With pain and regret the Ursulines parted with their good chaplain who, however could still render service in parish labor as an assistant priest.

In 1840, our Father Daulé celebrated, at the Ursulines, his golden jubilee of priesthood. The church, decorated at its best, holy Mass celebrated by the venerable jubilarian, during which there was music worthy of the occasion, a banquet for thirty invited priestly guests, the whole followed by a little dramatic entertainment : such was the programme of the feast which naturally terminated in crowning the veteran of the sanctuary, who already wore the peerless crown of virtue, beneath the silvery locks of age.

A few more years rolled on bearing on high their record of good works ; for Father Daulé, in the pulpit and in the humble confessional, continued to exercise the ministry as fruitfully as heretofore. He never forgot his former flock

within the cloister, and when in Quebec never failed to visit and bless his former spiritual daughters at the friendly parlor grating.

His last visit was in 1852. At the age of eighty-six the holy priest could still find a voice to sing a hymn of his own composing, *Beau ciel ! éternelle patrie*, while from his sightless orbs raised heavenward rolled tears of devotion.

A few months later, and there was a solemn *Requiem* mass sung in that chapel, now draped in mourning, where, during so many years, the saintly chaplain had officiated with tender piety and holy awe, at the same angust Sacrifice which was now offered for the repose of his soul.

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## CHAPTER XVII

1828-1833

### A FAMILY OF JUBILARIANS SPEEDILY REUNITED

MOTHERS ST. BERNARD AND ST. JACQUES

The venerable Bishop of Quebec, Bernard Claude Panet, celebrated in 1828, the Golden Jubilee of his priesthood. The following year his brother Rev. Jacques Panet completed also the half-century of his consecration to the service of the altar. Within the Ursuline Convent, their two sisters, Marie Archange and Françoise, in religion Mother St. Bernard and Mother St. Jacques, attained also the Fiftieth anniversary of their religious profession.

Let us recall the second of these occurrences which could not fail to be a celebration of unusual brilliancy, even without

the presence of the brother, Bishop Panet, who at the age of eighty, and in feeble health, had lately resigned the pastoral charge into the hands of an administrator, and retired to the Hôtel-Dieu.

On the 12th of February 1833, Mother St. Jacques, at the close of her eight days' retreat, renewed in the joy of her heart the vows she had faithfully observed during fifty years. The Administrator, Bishop Signay, offered the Holy Sacrifice, and addressed the pious jubilarian in an exhortation of which the theme was : "*Quid retribuam a Domino.*" What sentiment but gratitude to God for all His gifts and graces can fill the soul on such an occasion ?

When he intoned the *Te Deum*, his voice was answered by a numerous clergy who filled the sanctuary, and to these responded the thirty choir-nuns from the adjoining chapel.

A few hours later, a part of this goodly company was admitted to the interior of the convent, to witness an interesting entertainment prepared by the younger Sisters and the pupils to honor the venerable Mother on this interesting occasion.

Mother St. Henry, the beloved Superior, leads the way to the new hall of *St. Ursula*, which has been decked in festal style and is filled with the bright and happy faces of the pupils, who welcome their guests to the sound of gay music. When seated, Mother St. Jacques occupies the arm-chair near the Bishop ; next to her is her sister, Mother St. Bernard, the jubilarian of the preceding year. Mother Superior has taken her seat on the left. Mother St. Mary (La Ferrière) assistant, Mother St. Catherine (O'Neill) zelatrix, and Mother St. Gabriel, depositary, are mingled with the company, while a second circle is completed by the other nuns of the community and the novitiate.

Bewildered at first by the fairy-land to which they have been introduced, all are soon attentive to the song of greeting and the congratulatory address.

Let us not attempt to describe the sylvan scene amid which wander nymphs and goddesses, singing or discoursing of the beauties of the flowery mead. An animated discussion arises as they seek out the fairest of the lovely flowers, and entwine a wreath to crown the heroine of the day. Mother St. Jacques may have recognized the theme which is hardly new, yet it admits of so many variations that it has all the charm of novelty. Doubtless she has discovered among the graceful sylphs many of her kindred : grand-nieces and their cousins, the Panets, Taschereaus and others.

The morning rehearsal is over ; dinner also, in the bantered and tapestried refectory ; but St. Ursula's hall is filled again at two o'clock. Mother St. Henry's devoted friend Lady Aylmer wishes to enjoy the treat, and she has been graciously welcomed with the ladies of her suite at the convent door. We need not follow the company till they retire : Lady Aylmer is no stranger at the convent nor to the beloved jubilarians.

Alas ! for them, and for us all, if there was not another Day of Jubilee more lasting than those of earth.

Too soon must notes of joy yield to those of sadness. Venerable Bishop Panet, as we have said, was not present at the morning's celebration. The evening brought alarming tidings of a change for the worse in the malady from which he was suffering. Two days later, aided by the holy rites which he had so often administered to the dying, at peace with all the world as well as with his Creator, the aged prelate passed away, regretted by the clergy and the diocese he had wisely governed twenty years, mourned by all who

knew him, and especially by his two Ursuline sisters, whose footsteps were now nearing the entrance to the same dark Valley of Death.

Only four months later, and Mother St. Bernard had rejoined in heaven her favorite brother. Mother St. Jacques who had entered the convent a year after her sister, outlived the loved one twelve months. The last survivor, Rev. Jacques Panet, at the age of eighty years, died at l'Islet, two months after the sister who in religion had borne his name. Thus the four jubilarians, brothers and sisters, united in serving God on earth, were speedily reunited in His bosom for their eternal reward.

A few lines must suffice to characterize these two beloved Mothers whose memory has even remained fresh in the affection of the community.

Gentleness and refinement, with the ardent temperament inherited from their French ancestry sanctified and ennobled by true piety : such are the outlines of the picture preserved by tradition not far removed from the present day.

Blessed with health, talents and education, both were employed successfully in the class-rooms the greater part of the half-century and more which they gave to the service of God in the Monastery. To Mother St. Jacques had also been happily confided alternately the duties of Assistant-Superior and those of novice-mistress. Their lives had been peaceful and innocent, their last malady was neither long nor painful. All gently the hand of death set free the pure souls of the sister jubilarians to join the beloved brothers who had preceded them by so brief a space to that heavenly abode where there is no more parting.

## CHAPTER XVIII

1834

THE MONASTERY NARROWLY ESCAPES A TOTAL  
CONFLAGRATION

Every time the 12th of January has come round since 1834, the nuns after mass are heard joining in the hymn of thanksgiving: "*Praise ye the Lord, all ye nations; praise him, all ye people?*" LAUDATE DOMINUM, OMNES GENTES." In the course of the day, some of the pupils, or the younger members of the novitiate, are apt to inquire: "Why was the *Laudate* said this morning"; and the story of the fire is rehearsed. The most minute details never seem superfluous, so imminent was the danger and so providential the escape from a total conflagration.

First, it is explained that an out-house or shed, some twenty feet long, stood adjacent to the kitchen, on the south west of the main building *St. Augustine's*, serving as a store-room for fuel and a cold-pantry.

A lighted candle, it is supposed, had been unwarily left there late in the evening upon a shelf, and burning down to the socket it set fire to the combustible matter near it. This fire had been creeping from one smouldering mass to another for several hours, when it was discovered at two o'clock in the morning by the crackling sound of the earthen-ware it had reached in the kitchen. The infirmarian, awakened from her sleep, had only to step into the corridor to behold the flames issuing from an aperture in the door of the apartment beneath. Without losing her presence of mind, she ran to awaken the sick, and then to warn the nuns in their dor-

mitory, and the boarders who were sleeping in the adjacent building.

While this was being done and all were dressing in haste, the convent-bell had sounded the alarm, and the fire, inflaming the roof of the shed where it had originated, was perceived in various directions. The convent steward and the domestics were hurrying in. Our nearest neighbours, Judge Vanfelson and his son, Hon. Thos. Aylwin and Mr. R. E. Caron, (later Lieut.-Governor) met in the convent porch the chaplain Father C. Gauvreau, and at his request, undertook to guard the front door, in order to prevent the crowd from entering, for the terrible tocsin was ringing and awakening all the city. Colonel McDougall had called out his troops, and the convent grounds, although piled with snow, were filling with crowds of citizens of every class, all anxious to render service. The seminary priests, J. Demers, L. Gingras, John Holmes and their colleagues constituted themselves the special guardians of the Monastery; their day-students, rivalling with the regular firemen, were so prompt that their engine was the first brought into action.

In the mean time the pupils had quietly followed their mistresses to the chapel, to implore the protection of Heaven, and thence, to the extern school-house, where they would be in safety from any immediate danger. The nuns, as they passed with hurried step, dropped on their knees before the Tabernacle for a moment's prayer, and preserved their calmness while hastening to save every thing that could be removed from the apartment nearest the danger.

The night was every moment becoming brighter with the spreading flames. Now, the guarded conventual door opens to admit the Governor's Aide de Camp, who must see the Mother Superior immediately. Mother St. Henry, calm



and self-possessed in the midst of the confusion, promptly appears, and the messenger delivers to her an open letter. It was a pressing invitation on the part of Lord and Lady Aylmer for the nuns to accept a refuge in the Castle; the apartments were already being warmed and put in readiness, and carriages were in waiting at the convent door.

But all hope was not yet lost, and on every side the most vigorous efforts were directed to arrest the progress of the conflagration. A file of soldiers through the long corridors connected the kitchen with the cistern in the interior courtyard and buckets of water passed rapidly from hand to hand. The garden-cistern, buried in snow-drifts, was uncovered to supply the fire-engines working on the outside.

Yet there came a moment when it seemed that the destructive element was doomed to have the mastery.

The cellar beneath the kitchen, into which the floor had fallen, was one burning mass of coals; the infirmary above it, the attic and the roof were on fire. The refectory beyond the kitchen where the pine wainscoting and ceiling were as dry as one hundred and fifty years could make them, was so filled with smoke that one who penetrated to explore it<sup>1</sup> succeeded in making his exit only by creeping on his hands and knees. He had ascertained that the beams and ceiling were burning! While the least delay must prove fatal, shouts from the firemen announced that the pumps were freezing and could not be worked without large supplies of hot water. At this crisis—one to make the strongest heart quail in view of the impending calamity—the loud cry of faith went up to Heaven: Masses were promised, the pupils were called into

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1.—The Hon. Judge E. Bedard.

the chapel where many of the nuns had fled to pray, all our holy Protectors were called upon to help us.

One of the nuns had confided the protecting *ribbon of St. Amabilis* to the hands of the chaplain, worthier she thought, than her own to obtain a miracle; she had also fastened the precious badge to the door of the refectory, with a fervent prayer for the preservation of the convent. Another friend of the Ursulines, transported by compassion and the extremity of the peril, rushed into the infirmary and there, prostrate on the floor beneath which the flames were raging, he prayed like Moses on the Mount with outstretched arms, invoking the Divine clemency upon the sacred mansion, every stone of which, telling of past favors, pleaded for their continuance <sup>1</sup>.

That mingled concert of sighs, and vows, and prayers, was heard!

All at once, new energy seemed infused into every heart and every arm. From one point to another the wild flames were driven or kept in check, till at length, the most violent of the elements was under control. At seven o'clock, most of the engines had ceased to work. People could approach and look upon the charred remains of the small wooden building which had put the whole establishment in such jeopardy; they could behold the denuded kitchen, with blackened and creviced walls; the yawning cellar where smoked the winter's provisions; the refectory, with its ceiling broken in throughout half its length, and a pine beam that should have burnt like tinder, only marked by a few inches of charcoal: the infirmary without windows, and the roof above the attic partly consumed.

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1—This friend was the Rev. John Holmes.

It was Sunday, and at eight o'clock, the Convent bell rang again its signal for mass. Oh! with what grateful hearts did the nuns and their dear pupils kneel around that altar, to join the Eucharistic Sacrifice, that adequate thanksgiving for all blessings, spiritual or temporal.

The convent grounds were still occupied by the troops, in case the fire should again re-appear; but when another hour's tranquillity had proved that all danger had ceased, Col. McDougall, who had declared that he was ready to lose his life, if necessary in order to save the Convent, gave the word of command and with a light heart led off his faithful auxiliaries.

The students of the Seminary would not lose so good an opportunity to manifest their chivalry. Their fire-engine which won the prize for being the first to render service, remained all day on the grounds with a guard around it to give assistance in case of need. They probably deemed it a fortunate occurrence for them that the fire rekindled in the cellar, giving them an opportunity of proving their good will by working to extinguish it. During that Sunday and the following days, visits of congratulation and sympathy succeeded each other, till it seemed as if all the ladies of Quebec, from Lady Aylmer to good dame Jalbert, our steward's wife, had been to the convent. They must compliment the pupils on their quiet, orderly behaviour; they must assure themselves that none of the nuns have been seriously incommoded; they must see the ruins, and only after having been on the spot, could they fully realize how imminent had been the danger.

Yet, not even the nuns, perhaps, fully appreciated the protection of Heaven over the Monastery, until, only a fortnight later, the old Château St. Louis which, had withstood three sieges, took fire at mid-day, and in spite of all the

efforts of the troops and the aid of a dozen of fire-engines, was entirely consumed.

No! it was not in vain that so many vows had been offered for the preservation of the Monastery. Bishop Signay acquitted his promise on the following morning at the cathedral, by singing High Mass which became a public act of thanksgiving by the crowds who attended. On Tuesday, another High Mass was sung in the convent chapel, in the midst of a large concourse. Clergymen showed their sympathy by saying their Mass at the altar, where so many prayers had been offered in the moment of danger; and thus through the octave was manifested a spirit of faith and a charity, which we love to find the same as in the olden times.

The accident had only resulted in a comparatively insignificant loss; yet, for the moment, it was an embarrassing situation, in a family of about one hundred and forty persons, to have at hand neither cooking utensils, table service, nor food. Through the delicate attention of friends, and their unbounded kindness, all these wants were supplied with the utmost liberality. At the dinner hour the table, both for the nuns and the pupils, was spread with profusion. Now it was Lady Aylmer, sending from the Castle roasted sirloins and choice viands, the Governor adding his dozen of wine; so that our nuns feared to resemble the rich man who fared sumptuously every day. Now it was the nuns of the Hôtel-Dieu, with a full measure of wholesome soup and steaming vegetables. All the more wealthy ladies in the Upper Town had their turn in furnishing a repast for the inmates of the cloister, before a new state of things could be organized. Benefactions came in various forms; plates and dishes for the nuns' table, cooking utensils, coarse linen for kitchen use, provisions,

money: all is duly entered, with the donors' names, and many an expression of gratitude, on the pages of the annals.

The *Quebec Gazette* rendering an account of the fire, made the following remarks:

"In a convent of religious ladies, leading a retired and pious life, such an accident as threatened the Ursulines must have appeared very distressing. Yet these ladies displayed courage, activity, and self-possession in the highest degree. The Governor General had hastened to offer them the Castle, in case they should be obliged to abandon their house. Happily, their own intelligent efforts, aided by the zeal and energy of their friends, prevented the painful necessity of accepting the alternative."

Then follows from the nuns a card of thanks, "most grateful and sincere, to His Excellency and staff, to the officers and troops, to the gentlemen of the City Council, the magistrates, the seminary priests and students, to the fire-company, as well as to the numerous citizens of every class for their timely and efficient aid. The religious are most sensible to the reserve and politeness, manifested by all towards the inmates of the cloister.

"They acknowledge with gratitude the services of the watch kept around their goods, as well as around the ruins, and which was continued till Monday morning, in case the fire might break out anew."

The annalist has not forgotten to commend the good conduct of the pupils, their docility and the cheerfulness with which they accepted all the inconveniences entailed by the accident.

## CHAPTER XIX

1835

## THE TRIPLE FESTIVAL OF JULY 12TH

In the Church-calendar for 1835, the 12th of July is annotated as the feast of the Dedication of churches. It is a hallowed anniversary which moves the devout soul when, in its contemplations, it beholds the heavenly Jerusalem, *Urbs Jerusalem beata*, and traces the similitude between that City of our God and our Christian temples, whose precious foundation is Christ Himself. But a record of this yearly festival would hardly have been found on the pages of our annals, had not some other less ordinary event marked the day.

It was the *fête*, by anticipation, of the beloved Mother St. Henry, Superior of the community, and now in her fourth triennial term of office. Mother St. Henry has just passed the meridian of life, and for the last quarter of a century has had no respite from the responsibilities of government either in managing the temporal affairs as depositary, or the direction of the house as Superior. Yet is her countenance radiant with smiles, as her eyes rest with motherly affection on the numerous family confided by divine providence to her solicitude and direction. To-day however, the Superior's feast receives its chief *éclat* from its concurrence with other joyous celebrations, for this twelfth of July is also the occasion of a diamond jubilee.

It was the sixtieth anniversary of her religious profession for an aged nun, whose reminiscences extended over all the period that separated 1759 from 1835. She was there awaiting in the calmness of soul which is a foretaste of heaven. the moment to renew her vows publicly, even as she had

spoken them in her heart every day for the last sixty years, Mother Amable Dubé of St. Ignatius is the same who as a child, followed in the 14th Sept., 1759, at a late evening hour the funeral cortege of Montcalm, when the dead hero was borne in silence through almost deserted streets to be buried in the dilapidated church of the Ursulines.

Our readers have seen already that a jubilee festival is one of peculiar interest and rejoicing within the cloister. But on this July morning the inmates of the Old Monastery had other motives for their unwonted gladness. They shared the joy of the angels in heaven who were exulting to behold an immortal soul just invested with innocence in the sight of God, just purified by the saving waters of baptism.

Near the sanctuary railing knelt that youthful maiden whose white robes and flowing white veil were emblematical of the whiteness of her now happy soul. The holy sacrifice was being offered at the two altars, both brightly illuminated and glowing with rich summer flowers. At the high altar officiated the venerable Archbishop of Quebec, Right Reverend Joseph Signay. At the altar of the Sacred Heart stood the brother of the neophyte, absorbed in the priestly functions whereby he sought to testify the fulness of his intense gratitude.

While this happy young girl is waiting to be fed for the first time with the Bread of Life, let us briefly trace her history. Since nearly two years Miss Sarah Ann Holmes had been a pupil of the Ursulines. From her infancy, this descendant of Puritan forefathers had been taught to reverence the Almighty, to observe His commandments and to ask His assistance. Often and seriously had she pondered the question: "What shall I do to be saved?" but how discover the true road to heaven where so many by-paths were crossing each other on every side?

Here, while she has been a pupil in the convent, the Catholic religion has appeared before her in its true light, not as misrepresented by enemies. At first every thing seemed strange and unmeaning, but gradually, upon inquiry into the signification of rites and practices, all appeared reasonable and consistent. Finally, acting upon the principle which all Protestants profess, namely, the right to judge for herself in religious matters, she resolved to examine prayerfully the tenets of the Catholic Church, and read attentively the little volume entitled "A Catholic instructed in his religion." There, to her great surprise, she discovered that the great truths of Christianity which she had hitherto believed and which are contained in the Apostles Creed, are all taught in the Catholic Church. The doctrinal points which were new to her; the one true Church, the invocation of Saints, purgatory, etc., were as fully proved as those. The evidence flashes upon her, "But if this be so, I am then in error."

The fulness of light was not refused to her redoubled and earnest prayers nor the grace to determine upon following her convictions. Further instructions soon prepared her to join that Church which founded upon the "rock of truth," Christ Himself, can never err nor deviate from the teachings of its Divine Founder.

Many years previous her brother had been most providentially led to embrace the Catholic faith. The eldest of her five sisters had been baptized (at Berthier) by that brother's own hand, and now, could the secrets of future years have been unfolded before the brother and sister as their united prayers ascended to the throne of grace, they would have seen not long afterwards in that same chapel a younger sister baptized, who two years later would there consecrate herself to God. They would have seen another and another



of the six sisters, after mature research and deliberation, enter the true fold, till all happily knelt at the same altar, blessing to their latest breath the merciful hand of God that had so wonderfully led them from the darkness of error to the full light of truth <sup>1</sup>.

But to return to the cloister where the triple festival of July 12th is not yet over.

At the mid-day repast, the young convert wearing the white wreath of her First Communion, has her place among the nuns. She is seated at the table of honor between the Superior, Mother St. Henry, and the venerable jubilarian, Mother St. Ignatius, while the assistant-superior, Mother St. Mary (Laferrière) entertains two of the Sisters of the Congregation, invited guests on this joyous occasion.

Never had the old refectory, with its oak-pannelled walls, its brick-tiled floor, its elevated reading-desk and, above all, the long file of nuns who on either side, seated at the well-spread tables, were now smiling and talking, gayly enjoying the convivial hour, never had it presented a more animated scene, or borne an aspect better fitted to remind one of the Agapes of the early Christian times.

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1—Four of the six converts mentioned here exchanged in Canada their family name, the eldest becoming in Berthier, Mrs. Montferrand; the second (the neophyte), at St. Laurent, Mrs. De Celles; another, at Vaudreuil, Mrs. Edouard Lefavre, and the fourth, at Acton, became Mrs. Charles McLean.

Of the other two, the choice of one has been told; the younger married Mr. William Baldwin of North Stratford, N. H., where she is happily living at this date (1897). Neither of the survivors can ever deem herself a stranger in Canada, the land of her spiritual birth, the home of so many of her relatives bearing the names of Noiseux, Carmel, Lefavre, Duchesneau. The only surviving son of the neophyte baptized on the 12th of July, 1835, A. D. De Celles, Esq., bears a name not unknown to literary circles throughout the Dominion.

In conclusion let us add that the venerable Mother St. Ignatius, already an octogenarian since eight years, prolonged her holy life to complete her eighty-eighth year, taking leave of her beloved community of thirty-four professed choir-nuns to join the greater and happier one above, March 27th, 1839.

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## CHAPTER XX

1639 - 1839

### THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY

The preceding pages have displayed before our readers something of the Monastery's past; they have seen the protecting hand of Providence ever extended over it through the two centuries, from August 1, 1639, to the same date in 1839.

No doubt such an anniversary was one to be celebrated in the Convent with gratitude and pious rejoicings. The spiritual renovation to which it manifestly invited was foreseen from the beginning of the year. The examples of the venerable first foundresses were made a special study, and the words of the Apostle, "Be ye renewed in spirit," seemed to have their application to every individual soul. But the preparations carried on in this interior world of the spirit being intended for the eye of God alone, are mostly invisible to mortal sight, and scarcely come within the scope of ordinary observation.

Exterior preparations were not neglected. The chapel which in 1739 shone forth in its pristine beauty, now needed some repairs, and the decorations were to be as elaborate as possible.

Within the past thirty years however, the walls had been covered with rare and beautiful paintings from France, which were a richer ornament than would have been the most costly drapery or the most skilful combination of artistic embellishments. Our cloistered artists, vying with each other in their efforts to honor the occasion, put into requisition the pencil and easel, and every hour of leisure saw the results of ingenuity and good will. Emblematical and commemorative paintings on transparent tissues filled the windows, banners skilfully wrought and light banderoles inscribed with appropriate mottoes, streamed at various heights around the sanctuary, alternating with festoons of evergreen and blooming wreaths. The altar presented one bright array of flags and flowers. Enthusiasm, moderated by religious feeling, and that solemnity attached to enjoyments, the recurrence of which cannot be expected, prevailed throughout the community and reached its climax on the great day.

The large number of masses celebrated at the three altars, the skilful execution of one of Mozart's Masses by the nuns and the pupils, while at the grand altar officiated the Bishop of Quebec and sixty clergymen filled the sanctuary; the singing of Vespers, the same dignified assembly forming one choir and the forty-two nuns, the other; the remarkably appropriate oration, by Reverend C. F. Baillargeon (then pastor, afterwards Archbishop of Quebec); the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament; the *Te Deum* chanted to the fullest swell of the new organ: these were the principal features of the day. They were sufficient to mark the commemoration as one of the most thrilling interest, a day never to be recalled to mind without emotion by any who took part in its festivities. As at the first centennial, the Communion of Saints was not forgotten; the dear deceased had their part in the

festival and thirty Masses were offered for their more speedy admission to the realms of bliss.

The circumstance that reminded one most forcibly of the changes that TWO HUNDRED YEARS had brought was the absence of the Indian race from the celebration. Was it not especially for them that in 1639, the Ursulines and the *Hospitalières* had landed on the shores of a wild and savage country? The poor aborigenes had been among the first to reap the fruits of their heroic charity, but to-day there exist only scattered remnants of a race destined to a gradual extinction. Surely no one can reflect upon such a fate without commiseration, nor stand unmoved beside the grave of a people. In the few rude hamlets that still remain to the Indians in Lower Canada, the tradition of what the Ursulines have done for them has been preserved, and will probably perish only with the last of their race.

If we regard the political aspect of Canada in 1839, in contrast to its early times, we remark that for many a year no shadow of war had overcast its prospects with gloom. There had been indeed some recent disturbances; but they were not wide-spread nor lasting. There were painful memories in the city of Quebec, of the terrible visitations of 1832 and 1834, which could not be forgotten<sup>1</sup>. Yet Canada was to experience again "that she is a country guarded in a special manner by Divine Providence: that at the moment when all would seem lost, there would arise unforeseen succor and events favorable to its prosperity."

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1.—The Asiatic cholera in 1832, made in Quebec 3,451 victims; in 1834, 2509. It appeared a third time in 1849, and again in 1851-52, and 1854, but its three last apparitions were far less fatal.

To the nuns the contrast of the present with the past was of a nature to excite their devout gratitude. In the calamity just alluded to, that had darkened the land (1832 and 1834), filling Quebec especially with mourning on every side, the convent had stood unharmed, proving once more the salubrity of the site chosen for the home of the Ursulines by their incomparable foundress, and manifesting the kind protection of Heaven over an institution devoted to the most beneficent of works, the instruction of youth.

Within a few years also the same kind Providence had brought them a signal protector, "a second founder," in the person of their revered chaplain, Reverend Thomas Maguire, Vicar General of the Diocese of Quebec, to whose merits the Bishops of Canada had lately rendered a striking homage by twice deputing him on a voyage to Europe on business of importance to all the country.

To him the Ursulines with their ecclesiastical Superior, had confided the temporal affairs of the monastery, and to his intelligent investigation, his patient and laborious research, his foresight and firmness, his experience, his spirit of order and economy, they were happy to ascribe the prosperity which had succeeded to a labyrinth of pecuniary difficulties.

We shall close this brief account of the bi-centennial celebration by two lists which may prove of some interest to our readers.

The first is a list of the Superiors who have presided over the destinies of the community from 1739 to 1839.

The 11th Superior Mother Migeon of the Nativity elected first in 1735, was re-elected and governed till 1741; also from 1753 to 1760.

12. Mother Geneviève la Grange of St. Louis; from 1740 to 1744.
13. Mother Geneviève Boucher de St. Pierre; from 1750 to 1753.
14. Mother Esther Wheelwright of the Infant Jesus; from 1760 to 1766; 1769 to 1772.

15. Mother Margaret Davanne of St. Louis de Gonzague; from 1766 to 1769; 1772 to 1778; 1781 to 1787.
16. Mother Antoinette Poulin of St. Francis; from 1778 to 1781.
17. Mother Marie Charlotte Brassard of St. Clare; from 1787 to 1793.
18. Mother Marie Louise Taschereau of St. Francis Xavier; from 1793 to 1799; 1805 to 1811; 1815 to 1818.
19. Mother Marguerite Marchand of St. Ursula; from 1799 to 1805; 1811 to 1815 (deceased in office.)
20. Mother Mary Louisa McLoughlin of St. Henry; from 1818 to 1824; 1830 to 1836.
21. Mother Julie Berthelot of St. Joseph; from 1824 to 1827.
22. Mother Marguerite Boissonnault of St. Monica; from 1827 to 1830.
22. Mother Adelaïde Plante of St. Gabriel, elected first in 1836, re-elected in 1839.

## THE COMMUNITY IN 1839

## COMPOSED OF THIRTY-EIGHT PROFESSED CHOIR-NUNS

	Professed in
Mothers Françoise Giroux des Anges.....	1787
Geneviève Berthelot of St. Joseph.....	1792
Angelique La Ferrière of Ste. Marie.....	1797
Marie Lse McLoughlin of St. Henry.....	1800
Marie F. Aubin of St. Antoine.....	1802
Marie Thérèse Oneille of Ste. Catherine.....	1803
Marie Louise Oneille of Ste. Gertrude.....	1804
Marie Thérèse Lyonnais of Ste. Claire.....	1809
Sophie Rose Fiset of Ste. Elisabeth.....	1810
Geneviève McKutcheon of St. Helen.....	1811
Margaret Cuddy of St. Athanasius.....	1811
Marie Angèle Morin of Ste. Pélagie.....	1813
Marie Marg. Boissonnault of Ste. Monique.....	1815
Adélaïde Plante of St. Gabriel.....	1815
Elisabeth Montreuil of St. Augustin.....	1817
Catherine Couture of Ste. Ursule.....	1818
Catherine Côté of Ste. Agnès.....	1818
Marie Archange Point of Ste. Madeleine.....	1818
Marie Louise Bourbeau of St. Stanislas.....	1818
Isabella McDonnell of St. Andrew.....	1823

	Professed in
Mothers Marguerite Perreault of Ste. Agathe .....	1824
Elizabeth Harrison of St. Joseph.....	1824
Louise F. Blais of Ste. Thérèse.....	1824
Catherine McDonald of St. Louis.....	1825
Cecilia O'Conway of the Incarnation.....	1825
Mary Ann Barber of St. Benedict.....	1828
Ann Barber of St. F. Xavier.....	1828
Ann McDonnell of St. John the Evangelist.....	1828
Christine Vermette of Ste. Angèle.....	1829
Ann Victoria White of St. J. de Chantal.....	1830
M. J. de Chantal I étourneau of St. Paul.....	1830
M. Theresa Sherlock of St. Scholastica.....	1831
Marie Louise Aylwin of St. Philip.....	1832
Séraphine Truteau of Ste. Anne.....	1834
Joséphine Michaud of Ste. Cécile.....	1835
Catherine Burke of St. Thomas.....	1835
Emilie Dechène of St. Francis Borgia.....	1836
Catherine Murphy-Kelly of St. Philomena.....	1838

*Three white-veiled novices*

Sisters Elisabeth Dechène of St. Louis de Gonzague.
Josephine Holmes of Ste. Croix.
Marie Lucie Deligny of Ste. Winefride.

*Twelve professed lay-sisters*

	Professed in
Sisters Françoise Leclerc of St. Alexis.....	1803
Judith Bilodeau of Ste. Rose .....	1807
Madeleine Boulet of St. Regis.....	1812
Thérèse Couture of St. Denis.....	1812
Marie Anne Brière of St. Ambroise.....	1815
Geneviève Lacroix of St. Nicolas .....	1816
Claire Lefèvre of St. Claude.....	1831
Basile Ratté of Ste. Geneviève.....	1822
Françoise Fournier of St. Clément.....	1824
Modeste Gagnon of Ste. Thècle.....	1825
Madeleine Bodin of Ste. Marthe.....	1830
Françoise Berniche of St. Hyacinthe.....	1836

Total: fifty-three.

## CHAPTER XXI

## PATRONS OF THE URSULINES

## HOUSES OF THE ORDER

When a youthful candidate for the religious life has been admitted to the interior of the cloister, one of the first ascetical books presented to her study is the "Directory of Novices," the guide-book in the new world to which she is being introduced. She peruses its pages with mingled curiosity and admiration; but nowhere, perhaps, does she feel more impressed with the angelic life that is set before her, than in the chapter that treats of her duties towards the inhabitants of heaven, the Saints.

"The religious soul, says her guide, having abandoned the world and forgotten, according to the advice of the Psalmist, 'her people and her father's house,' enters into a strange land, contracts new alliances, and becomes as the Apostle says, 'a fellow-citizen with the saints.'"

"This should inspire her with respect, confidence and devotion towards all the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem, with whom she has henceforth the privilege to be associated.

"The Blessed Virgin is to be honoured as her first and principal Superior; St. Joseph as the special patron and protector of the Monastery of Quebec; but there are other patrons of the order with whom it behoves her to form acquaintance. These are St. Augustine, St. Ursula and St. Angela. She must study their lives, imitate their virtues, and have recourse in filial confidence to their intercession.



"Thus, continues her guide, making the Saints thy companions, thou shalt attain sanctity ; and having thy conversation more in heaven than upon earth, thou shalt thyself become like the Angels."

Encouraged by these magnificent promises, she resolves to study the lives and examples of her holy patrons. She has not failed to hear already of St. Augustine, one of the brightest geniuses of the early ages of the Church. The rule he composed for the monasteries of his time, the fourth century, and which is still followed by many religious orders, has formed as many saints, perhaps, as it contains letters.

Wonderful legends, leading back to the fifth century, surround the name of St. Ursula ; legends illustrated by painting and sculpture, and celebrated by monuments as enduring as they are majestic and venerable. The historic church of St. Ursula and her thousands of companions stands at a short distance from the beautiful cathedral of Cologne : the Field of the Martyrs is not far away, and the golden chamber, piled high with many a gilded casket, enclosing their relics, is open to the devout or the inquisitive visitor.

As to the stupendous events handed down to us by the legend, some may adopt that version which gives to the princess Ursula the Isle of Albion as her home, and the land of Brittany as the term of her voyage ; the assembling of so many young girls around her is then explained as the result of a compact between the prince of Cornwall, her father, and the late conqueror of Gaul. Others may prefer that more marvellous and fascinating narrative, which tells of stranger vicissitudes ; of long negotiations, of celestial visions, by which the future martyr is warned to prepare by a long pilgrimage for the glorious but bloody fate that awaits her. On either hand we have the same catastrophe ; the arrival of the voyagers on the banks of the Rhine at

Cologne, the presence of the barbarous cohorts of the Huns, and finally the martyrdom of the virginal troop by those vindictive and ferocious warriors disappointed of their prey.

Leaving the field of conjecture and discussion, we find St. Ursula honored as the patroness of learning and piety, long before the religious order bearing her name arose in the Church. Cologne itself was the centre of a great confraternity in honor of the virgin-martyr, under the title of ST. URSULA'S BARK.

The renowned University of Sorbonne founded in the 13th century was placed under the patronage of the same great princess, whose wise precepts and fervent exhortations had guided her youthful charge so effectually, that in the direst extremity of peril, they all remained faithful to their duty and to their God.

The prerogative ascribed to St. Ursula, making her the patroness of institutions of learning, renders it easy to account for the choice St. Angela made of her name in founding an order exclusively devoted to the pious education of female youth. The humble foundress, at the same time, had found the means to avoid leaving her own name to her followers, who will not be known as ANGELINES but as URSULINES.

The new institution of St. Angela, the first of the kind, known in the Church, dates from the year 1535; its cradle was the ancient city of Brescia, in the north of Italy.

The foundress was born in the little town of Desenzano, on Lake Garda, six leagues from Brescia, of parents rich in piety and virtue more than in the wealth that perishes with its possessor. In those precious years when the future lot of children is shadowed forth by the formation of their character, Angela was edified by the bright examples of a truly Chris-

tian household; her faith was strengthened, and she began from that tender age to walk in the ways of wisdom and sanctity.

Trials came early to wean this soul from every earthly attachment. An orphan, and bereaved of an only sister, she was not abandoned; kind relatives continued to protect her childhood till its promise of excellence ripened into the practice of every virtue.

Passing unnoted the various incidents of a life mostly serene, and at all times pure and blameless, we hasten to remark the circumstances that accompanied the founding of the new order.

It was in a vision that Angela, like the prophets of old, first learned what great things God demanded of her. A mysterious ladder, reaching from earth to heaven, was displayed before her; troops of virgins appeared mounting the steep ascent, each one being attended and aided by a bright-winged Angel. The words, "Angela, thou shalt live to found an order of Virgins in the Church, of which this spectacle is the figure," struck her wondering ear and the celestial vision disappeared.

The enterprise seemed so far above her strength that Angela hesitated long and waited for further intimations of the Divine Will. She only undertook its execution after repeated consultations with her ecclesiastical superiors, and when, by a new communication from Heaven, she had learned that further delay would not be acceptable to God.

Already the companions of the saintly maiden were her associates in good works, visiting the sick, succoring the poor, comforting the distressed. To these practices, Angela now joined the instruction of youth; and gradually there assembled around her a company, filled with the noblest zeal for their own perfection and the salvation of souls. The new

congregation received its first rules and its twofold object from the venerable foundress : it was a legacy of inestimable price.

Alas! the earthly career of the virgin of Brescia was drawing to a close. Having given the first impulse to the order, she seemed, like holy Simeon of old, to have lived enough. But even during the few years that she was spared to direct her spiritual daughters, their number had increased to sixty. Like Moses, on the borders of the Promised Land, she foresaw the wonderful multiplication of her institution and the blessings that were destined to crown her labors. With calmness she bade adieu to her beloved daughters in Christ, plainly foretelling the stability of the order which she declared would endure to the end of time.

It is not within the brief limits assigned us here that we can trace the truly wonderful extension of the Order, first through Italy, then to France and to the other countries of Europe, till, at the close of the eighteenth century, the revolutionary tornado found over three hundred houses to destroy in the kingdom of France alone.

The opportuneness of the institution of the Ursulines has been often remarked. It was at an epoch when the perils of new doctrines, the scandal of great and public defections, rendered more necessary than ever the solid instruction of youth in the tenets of the true Church. The heart of woman especially, to whose guidance, the souls of men, during the plastic season of childhood, are confided, needs to be a fount of wisdom and piety. It can only become that "spring of living water," fit to profit others to eternal life, by being itself saturated with the dews of heaven.

It remains to state the extent of the order of St. Ursula at the present day. A list of the principal monasteries in France, where they had been swept away just before the

commencement of the nineteenth century, would show that the arduous task of restoration has been crowned with a success truly providential. More than one hundred and fifty convents, inheriting the spirit of St. Angela like their predecessors, continue the pious labor of the instruction of young girls; some of them on the very sites whence the persecuted Ursulines were driven into exile, or led to martyrdom <sup>1</sup>.

In America, including the two Spanish communities of the Island of Cuba, and three in South America, there are about thirty convents of Ursulines. In Ireland, there are four; in England, three; in Belgium, thirty-two; in Rome, there are two, while in other parts of Italy, in Holland, Austria, Germany and the rest of Europe, are others to the number total of about three hundred. These convents assemble, it is calculated, as many as twelve thousand religious, who impart the benefits of a pious and solid education to at least one hundred thousand young girls.

If, in conclusion, we might express the most ardent wish of our heart, it would be that the words uttered by a venerable member of the Catholic hierarchy might ever and in all countries find their just application in reference to every pupil of the Ursulines. The words were these: "I never knew a lady educated in an Ursuline convent, who was not the instrument of diffusing piety and happiness around her <sup>2</sup>."

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1—Twenty-five Ursulines, in France, had the supreme honor and happiness of sealing with their blood their fidelity to their duty and their religion.

2—Words of Rt. Rev. John England, Bishop of Charlestown, S. Carolina.

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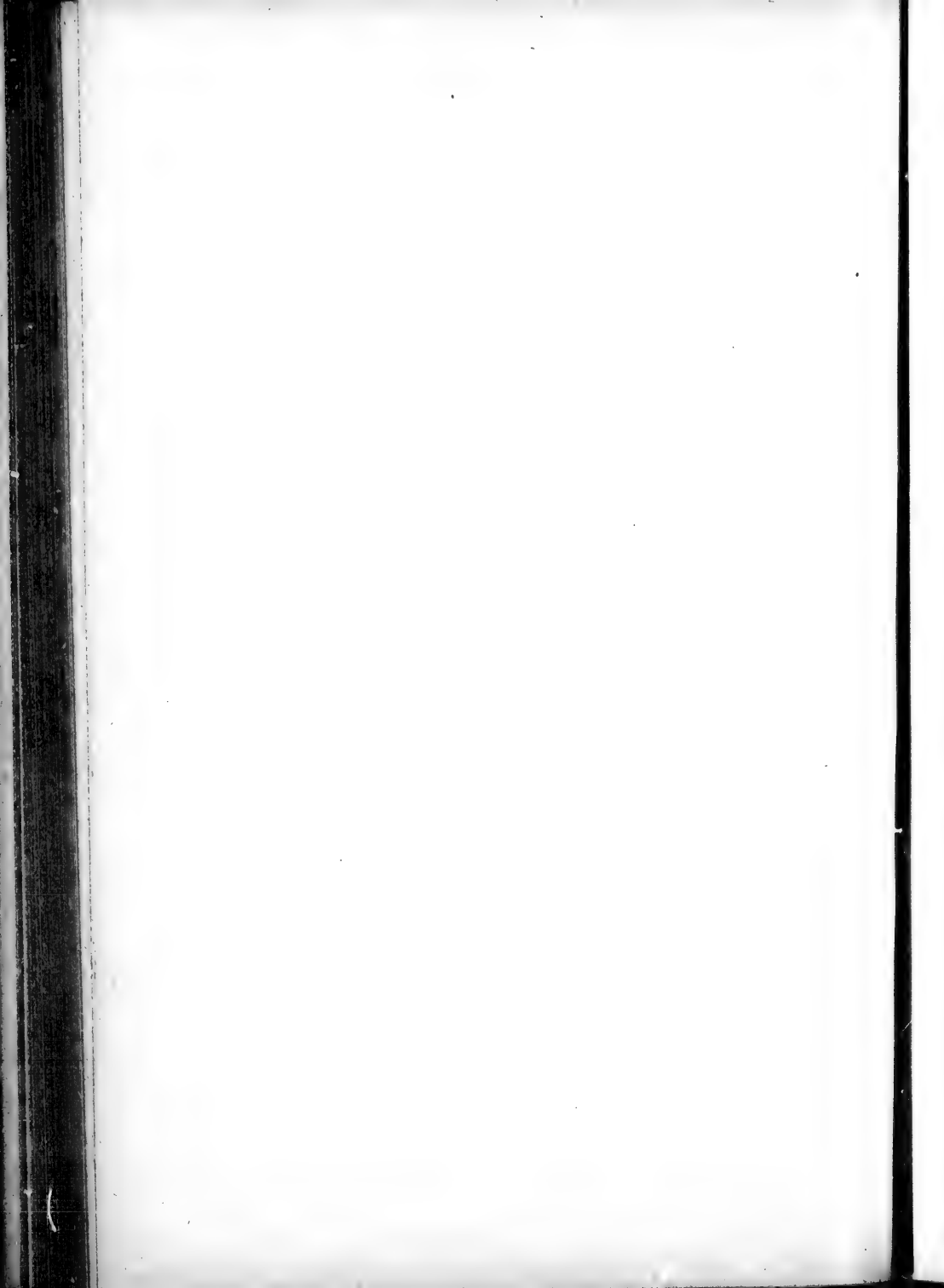
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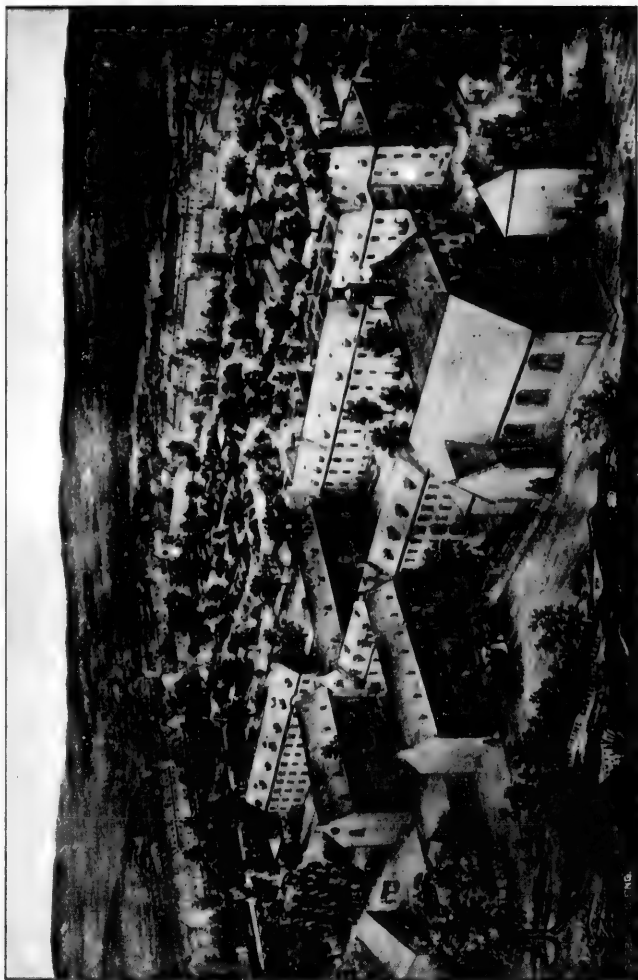


**REMINISCENCES**  
**OF**  
**FIFTY YEARS IN THE CLOISTER**









BIRDSEYE VIEW OF THE URSULINE CONVENT.  
on the 25th anniversary of its foundation, 1889

# REMINISCENCES

OF

## FIFTY YEARS IN THE CLOISTER

1839 - 1889

"Sweet is the remembrance of joys that are past,  
pleasant and mournful to the soul."—OSSAÏN.

### A SEQUEL

TO

## GLIMPSES OF THE MONASTERY

BY THE SAME

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A. M. D. G.

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QUEBEC

PRINTED BY L. J. DEMERS & FRÈRE  
30, De la Fabrique street

1897

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*Imprimatur,*

† L. N., Archiep. Cyren., Adm.

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# REMINISCENCES

OF

## FIFTY YEARS IN THE CLOISTER

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1839 - 1889

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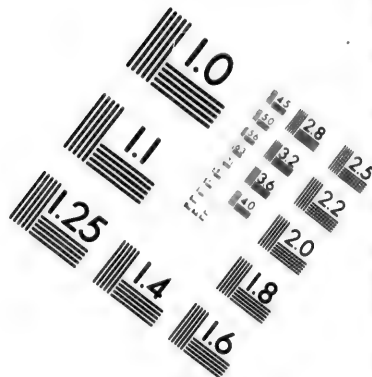
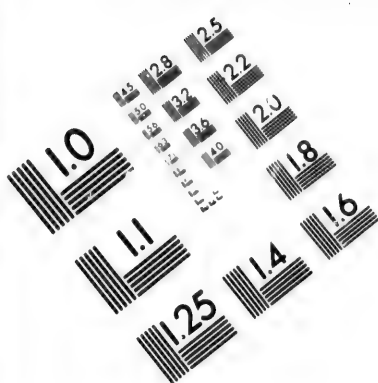
### CHAPTER I

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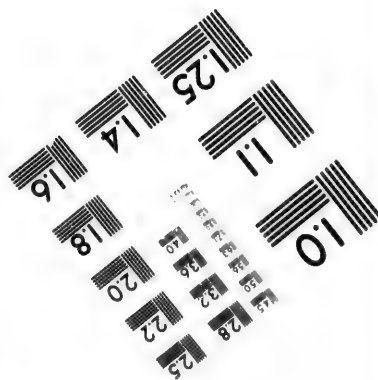
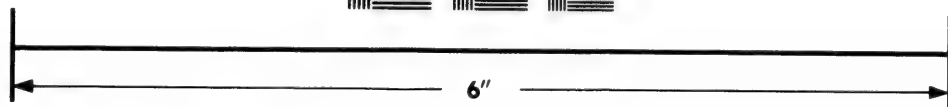
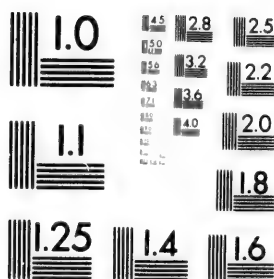
FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT

#### INTRODUCTORY

On the first of August, 1839, the Monastery was celebrating the fourth of those great epochs, a period of fifty years, of which at the present date (1897) it reckons five. The last pages of the "Glimpses of the Monastery" related the proceedings on that occasion, and now it is expected of us to set forth on a similar plan the scenes of the last fifty years, all of which are within the grasp of memory. It is no longer the mingled threads of tradition we have to unravel, nor the brief records on the pages of the annals that will be our sole guide, but we can now tell of "what we have seen and testify to what we have known".



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It will be the travel from one golden mile-stone to another from 1839 to 1889, with the companions of the way and the various incidents of the route. One after another the companions of the morning hours disappear, to be replaced by others, of lighter footsteps perhaps, but of less familiar features, till the whole company press around the one solitary survivor of that morning start and question her of the past. The request is heard with willing ear, for the aged love to recall the memories of their early years. It is no longer in "rosy dreams," as in youth, that they place their delight, but they view with pleasure the distant landscape, the hills and valleys which they have left behind, and which in imagination are still peopled with all that made them delightful, or sad, or impressive, when the journey was being performed.

Among these companions of the way, none are so conspicuous as the leaders, hence we shall open this book with a biographical sketch of the lives of two Superiors to whom was entrusted the government of the monastery from 1839 till 1874. The two spiritual guides whose services extended over the whole half century have not been forgotten. Neither have we omitted the names of some of the laborers in the vineyard of the Lord, whose arrival in the field seemed providential, nor of others whose prolonged services demanded this distinction. The names of these and of other younger members of the cloistered family whose briefer career has been noticed, are remembered in many a happy household, both in Canada and beyond the limits of their native land.

In short, pursuing the familiar theme of convent life, we have noted such events as occur to vary the scene. Thus we initiate our readers into the secrets of the cloister, where, as Faber says of those who live habitually in a state of grace, "all is peace and contentment, while thoughts of heaven

and the hope that its joys will one day be ours, draw us already with magnetic force into the spheres of its abounding happiness."

If an occasional page in verse is inserted, it is to complete the narrative and give coloring to the scene of which it forms a part. As will be observed, these verses were not written with a view to their publication. To such of our readers, as were once pupils in the Convent, they will serve to recall more vividly with all its associations some day in the old-time school-life, imprinted on memory's tablets, to be cherished as long as that faculty retains its power of giving pleasure.

And here, before we quit the date of the 200th year, August 1. 1839, we shall revive the colors of that distant picture by a fragment of the poem which one of the nuns of that day has chanced to preserve, and which will enable the reader to judge what enthusiasm prevailed on that occasion.

This is the day. 'Tis now two hundred years !  
Lift ! lift the curtain. Lo ! the scene appears.  
Wild is the prospect round, where rises bold  
Cape Diamond's crowned crest, mid forests old ;  
Home of the swarthy tribes, while ages sped  
Ere yet was heard th'invading white man's tread.  
But Champlain came ; and where he set his foot,  
A vine sprang up and fixed its hardy root.  
A future city, mid the rocks he traced  
With winding streets, then on the heights he placed  
A citadel, to guard, where proudly waves  
The lily flag of France.

The cross that saves  
Surmounts a spire and points us to the sky.  
But wherefore on this morn this tumult high ?  
These light canoes that border all the shore ?  
Why this parade of arms ? The cannon's roar  
Has brought an eager crowd to line the beach  
While o'er the waters shouts of welcome reach.

Oh ! well may joyous crowds come out to greet  
These messengers from God's own Mercy seat !  
What were thy thoughts, O thou who didst behold  
This land in vision, like the seers of old ?  
Thou, with the Heart of Jesus for thy stay,  
Hast pleaded long to see this happy day.  
This is thy land of promise, Eden blest ;  
Upon its sacred soil thy lips are pressed.

And thou, dear noble lady ! gentle dame,  
Whose generous soul with holy love aflame  
All earthly joys hast spurned ; behold the field  
That waits thy zeal to richest harvest yield.

All meekly joyful ; wondering, yet serene  
That band heroic view the novel scene.

After this fragment, bringing to mind the younger members of the community, who alone would be likely to indulge in day-dreams, let us introduce by their titles and offices a few of the rejoicing ones of 1839.

At the head of a community of thirty-eight nuns, Rev. Mother Plante of St. Gabriel is presented to us, re-elected to the superiority a few weeks previous to the celebration of the monastery's bi-centennial. By her side appears the assistant-superior, the beloved Mother McLaughlin of St. Henry, more aged, yet still attractive by that look of dignity, intelligence and suavity which constantly won the hearts of all who knew her. The third officer, the zelatrix, is a gentle, frail-looking nun whom we name Mother O'Neill of St. Gertrude.

The fourth of the "higher seven" who compose the council is Mother St. Andrew, recently the incomparable novice-mistress, of whom our readers will yet hear more. At present she has charge of a busy office less congenial to the pious mind than some others in the convent, which gives her the title of bursar or depositary.

Among all these thirty eight professed choir-nuns, there is but one jubilarian, Mother Giroux des Anges, while not far away in rank is the amiable Mother la Ferrière of Ste. Marie who now presides at the novitiate.

Our readers will soon have an opportunity to form an acquaintance with these young Sisters, the novices, as they will also with the well-beloved Mother.

A few names and titles, and our introductions will be over. Here let us present the mistress-general of the boarders, Mother Couture of St. Ursula, as dignified as she is benevolent, Mother Vermette of St. Angela and Sister Dechêne of St. Francis Borgia, first and second directresses and teachers of the boarders. The half boarders' department is under the superintendence of Mother St. Athanasius, and the day-school under that of Mother St. Helen, with a good staff of teachers, for in both these schools the pupils were numerous.

After this rapid view of the *personnel* of the community in 1839, we might make a longer pause in the midst of that moving population, the pupils' department of the institute. There many of our readers would discover by her maiden name an aged grand-mamma, a grand-aunt or some aged friend of the family, who allows no one to ignore the fact of her having spent some years a boarder in the convent.

If the school-days of that aunt or that grand-mamma included the celebration of the bi-centennial, she remembers the convent building of those days, which seems almost lost to-day in the many additions it has received.

Yet will it be found that the same spirit reigns to-day as in the olden times. The convent is that "garden enclosed" over which the heavenly guardian ever watches with tender care and loving predilection.



## CHAPTER II

—  
SUPERIORS FROM 1839 TO 1872

## MOTHERS ST. GABRIEL, AND ST. ANDREW

It seems natural to unite here under one heading the names of two Mothers who governed the community so many years in the same spirit, guiding St. Ursula's bark alternately with the same firm and gentle hand, the same uniform kindness and charity. Who then was this much esteemed, much beloved Mother St. Gabriel? Her family name was Adélaïde Plante; she was born in the parish of St. John (Isle of Orleans), of highly respectable parents, who cultivated their own farm, and brought up their children in the pure principles of our holy religion. After her first Communion, and an elementary education in the parish-school, Adélaïde was sent during two years to our convent where she continued her studies.

At sixteen, she already wore the white veil as a novice, the gayest of the gay, in that nursery of cheerfulness and religious fervor, the novitiate. Her self-possession, her dignity and aptitude for enforcing the discipline of the school must have been remarkable, to have warranted her appointment as directress of the boarders shortly after her profession. Yet it is related that if she succeeded in restraining her joyousness in presence of the pupils, it often happened on returning to the quiet apartment of the novices, that a hearty fit of laughter would be silently enjoyed before she could commence the occupations that awaited her there.

In 1830, she was elected to take charge of the temporal affairs of the Monastery as depositary; and in 1836, she

was chosen for Superior, replacing the able and beloved Mother St. Henry, whose second term of office had expired.

The Convent which since one hundred and twenty years had preserved the same dimensions, no longer afforded sufficient room nor conveniences for the yearly increasing number of pupils. Mother St. Gabriel's first care was to provide the half-boarders with a separate department for their classes, by the erection of a new building named St. Angela, along Parlor street. The same year, the house known as Madame de la Peltrie's, which, although it had been enlarged, was still insufficient for the numerous pupils of the day-school, was demolished and rebuilt. Meanwhile, aided by the experienced hand of our excellent chaplain, Father Thomas Maguire, the course of studies in the institution was carefully revised, and a new Order of the day elaborated.

To the system of examinations by the Mother Superior and the teachers, which had hitherto prevailed, was substituted (1837, 1838) as our readers have already been informed, a semi-public examination, followed by the distribution of prizes, the Bishop presiding with other members of the clergy.

In 1839, by the advice of the same indefatigable friend of the institution, Father Maguire, the parents of the pupils were admitted to this examination and entertainment which took place in a spacious hall in the new wing, St. Angela.

In 1848, Mother St. Gabriel was again at the helm, rendering her community happy by her judicious management and motherly care, ever animated by the spirit of our Lord who has declared that "his yoke is easy and his burden light."

Before the close of her second term (1853-54), another building of fair proportions, "Notre-Dame de Grâce" (120

feet by 50) had risen within the cloistered grounds, destined to afford a separate department for the exclusive use of the senior division of the boarders.

Another important measure decided upon during Mother St. Gabriel's administration, in 1859, was the admission of the pupils of the Normal School to occupy a department of the institution, while the programme of instruction was to be conducted in part by secular teachers. The suitable accommodation of these sixty or seventy students ultimately required the erection of another large building, St. Joseph's, in the near vicinity of Notre-Dame de Grâce.

But our readers are waiting for a closer acquaintance with this Reverend Mother, who is evidently held in high esteem by those who know her best. It would be almost superfluous to say that Mother St. Gabriel was at all times and in all circumstances the model of a perfect religious, animated with unbounded charity, unfeigned humility, a spirit of faith which seemed to realize the unseen. In her daily life and conduct she was the living rule. When before the altar, her very attitude was an incentive to piety. At the hour of recreation, her cheerful manner and pleasant smile invited to innocent mirth and sprightly conversation, while her busy fingers, responding to her natural activity, were ever engaged in some useful occupation.

Our Mother cherished above all the privilege of working for the altar, and following the example of our ancient Mothers, long before a Tabernacle Society was known in Quebec, the resources of her energetic character and benevolent heart were exerted to supply the poor missionary with church articles, vestments, flowers, altar linen, &c. Year after year, as new chapels were built along the Gulf, the coasts of Labrador, the Saguenay, or the distant posts in the

wilds of the North-West, Mother St. Gabriel was ever ready to furnish the equipments for the occasion. If the funds generously placed at her disposal by the community were exhausted, there were friends and former pupils to send in old silks and satins, velvets and ribbons, flowers, &c., knowing how gratefully they would be received, and how skillfully renovated, until they would be as good as new. They knew also that while the good Mother and the young Sisters her willing aids were thus piously engaged, many a fervent ejaculation would be sent up to Heaven in behalf of the donors.

Mother St. Gabriel bore lightly the burden of the office of Superior, neither disheartened by its solitudes nor elated by its honors. When persons of rank and distinction visited the cloister our dear Mother, ever calm and self-possessed, conducted the reception with all the grace and serenity of one "to the manner born." In her intercourse with the pupils or with their parents, her invariable composure, her benevolent countenance, the interest she manifested in their welfare, never failed to conciliate their good will and to reconcile them to an authority so gentle and condescending.

Before pursuing further our notice of Mother St. Gabriel's long and useful career, let us introduce her colleague in office, whose name is equally dear and venerated in the community.

Mother St. Andrew, known in the world as Isabella McDonell, made choice of the Ursuline Convent to consecrate herself to God, without any previous personal acquaintance with the sisterhood. Her then distant home was Glengary, Canada West. There is, however, a key to the mystery of this choice of the Old Monastery for her future home.

A few months previous to her decision, there had been great rejoicings among the staunch Catholic population of

Glengary, on hearing of the appointment of the first Bishop of Upper Canada, *their* Bishop effectually, since he was not only a Scotchman from Scotland, but a McDonell. The Right Reverend Alexander McDonell<sup>1</sup>, was moreover, Isabella's uncle, and knew of her desire to embrace the religious state, while his own most ardent wishes were to secure a foundation for the new diocese from the Ursuline Convent of Quebec.

This project was not destined to be realized, yet it was doubly fortunate, inasmuch as it procured the advantages of the religious life for Isabella and a younger sister who joined her later, both of whom, by their exemplary lives and services, have merited to be gratefully remembered in the community. Mother St. Andrew had pronounced the vows of religion in 1823, and her first services were rendered in the day-school, where English classes had just been opened in favor of the children of the Irish congregation in the city.

From 1836 to 1842, Mother St. Andrew was charged with the formation of the novices. From this important office, the votes of the community called her to succeed Mother St. Gabriel as Superior.

Of different national origin and in many respects different in character, they were one in heart and purpose, equally zealous for the general good and the welfare of each individual. Both were eminently conservative, venerating the traditions of the past, the simplicity and poverty of primitive times, yet appreciating modern improvements and ready to introduce them when required, especially in the departments appropriated to the pupils.

---

1—From Dumfries, Scotland, born 1762; received the Episcopal consecration in the church of the Ursulines, Quebec, December 31st, 1820. Created first Bishop of Kingston, 1826.

To characterize Mother St. Andrew, we should describe her as a person of deep sensibilities, a heart to feel and share another's sorrow or happiness; a sound judgment, matured by experience, a tender and conscientious sense of duty, a truly religious spirit which guided her on every occasion; such is the picture of this much revered Mother, indelibly fixed in the mind of all who were so happy as to have passed many years in her society or under her maternal guidance.

It was during Mother St. Andrew's first triennial term of office that the pupils, after a public examination and distribution of prizes (July 10th, 1843), were dismissed for a summer vacation, a measure which has now become a law, sanctioned by custom and general approbation.

The following years 1844, 1845, the sodality of the Children of Mary, made known to us by our beloved Sisters, the Ursulines of St. Mary's Waterford (Ireland), met Mother St. Andrew's ready approval and was established with the required formalities.

But at this date, 1845, how can we fail to recall to mind the awful calamities of the 28th May and of June, when two successive fires reduced to ashes the homes and comforts of two thirds of the population of the city, besides distroying several lives. The suburbs of St. Louis and St. Roch were one wild scene of ruin and disaster. "Heart-rending were the tales of woe heard on every side", wrote one of the nuns after the fire. "All the clergy have their hearts wrung at the sight of their suffering fellow-beings; the poor Bishop weeps when he speaks of the tragic scene."

Deeply the heart of our good Mother felt these woes, too great to be fully imagined or adequately relieved. Whatever alms or succor she could bestow was doubled to the sufferers by her tender condolence and sympathy.

The pupils of the institution knew how to appreciate Mother St. Andrew's invariable kindness, as well as her solicitude for all that regarded their comfort or their improvement. The sentiments expressed in the address which they presented her in 1862, on the occasion of the feast of St. Andrew, Nov. 30th, and which has fortunately been preserved, were doubtless as sincere as they were well-merited.

TO REV. MOTHER ST. ANDREW, SUPERIOR

Dear Reverend Mother,

Long our wishes call  
This festal day, that gilds at last our hall !  
For now, all clustered round thee, we may tell  
The feelings kind that in our young hearts dwell,  
And speak of gratitude, unfeigned, sincere,  
For all thy countless favors, Mother dear !

Who is it seeks with true maternal zeal,  
Our present happiness, and future weal ?  
Who watches o'er her flock with tender care ?  
Whose warning voice would guard from ev'ry snare ?  
And when our wayward feet are prone to stray,  
Who guides us sweetly back to wisdom's way ?  
Ah ! it is thine, dear Mother, thus to blend  
The offices of guardian, parent, friend.

Yes ! as the gardener tends with equal care  
The various plants that bloom in his *parterre* ;  
This from far China, that from India's shore,  
These from the mountain cliff where torrents roar ;  
On each bestows the needful time and toil,  
Till each unfolds as in its native soil ;  
So we transplanted to the cloister's shade,  
The objects of thy special care are made !

Oh ! may our minds' unfolding beauties prove  
Some slight return for thy unwearied love !

Here let me pause! 'tis an inspiring theme.  
But words, alas! how very weak they seem,  
And how they mock our efforts to portray  
All that we feel on this dear festal day!  
Ah! let the echoes of this proud hall ring,  
While with one voice, as with one heart we sing:  
Long live our Mother dear! long live our friend!  
May joys unnumbered on her steps attend!  
Long may that star of "purest ray serene,"  
Gild with new gladness every convent scene;  
Nor disappear, but brighter still to rise,  
And glow with fadeless lustre in the skies!  
Meanwhile, as years revolve we'll hail its gentle ray,  
And raise the joyful shout: "Long live St. Andrew's day!"

November 29th, 1855.

After filling a second term, Mother St. Andrew was appointed *depository* in lieu of Mother St. Gabriel, and thus, alternately, she had guided the community twelve years, when she was elected in 1866, although still suffering from an illness which had confined her to the infirmary for some months previous. "What we ardently desire, we readily believe," and thus it was that our beloved Superior's recovery appeared so certain.

One short month proved the fallacy of our sweet anticipations. The announcement of the approach of death was sudden, but the venerable Mother calmly welcomed the summons, and prepared for the departure by calling to her aid the last consoling rites of holy Church. The grief and consternation of all the sisterhood, thus unexpectedly called to part with the Mother of their choice, may be better imagined than described.

But the dawn of an eternal day was at hand, and with the evening of the feast of the Blessed Trinity, our venerated Mother sweetly passed away, cheerfully laying down a life



which had been wholly devoted to the service of God. Nor could the Angel of death efface the smile from those dear lips upon which a blessing for her Sisters seemed still to rest.

Another election, rendered necessary by Mother St. Andrew's decease, recalled Mother St. Gabriel to the office of Superior, nor was she spared a re-election three years later. This eighth triennial term completed the twenty-four years of her administration, the longest period on record among the twenty-three Superiors who until that date had governed the Monastery.

To Mother St. Gabriel had been reserved the honor and privilege of commencing the labors in the cause of the beatification of our first Superior and foundress, Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation. On the 25th of March, 1867, the first step was taken by the appointment of a procurator ; the first proceedings of the Commission opened on the 13th of May. Those who took part in the first proceedings were sanguine in their expectations of a speedy and successful issue ; but, after thirty years, the happy event is still waited for yet with ever increasing confidence.

Relieved of the superiority in 1872 Mother St. Gabriel continued to serve her community in the office of zelatrice and counsellor, and still plied her needle as in her younger days, although her failing sight would no longer permit her to prepare it for use with the all-necessary thread.

Only during the last three years of her long career had she to relinquish her usual seat in the community-hall and her favorite place in the chapel. But the infirmary also has its chapel and altar. There the divine Physician deigns to visit the sick and the infirm, even as in the days of his sojourn among men during his mortal life.

The end came gently, and without any violent suffering. Like St. Paul, our venerable Mother could say: "I have finished my course. I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of justice from heaven." Her death occurred on the 25th February, 1888, in Memoriam.

The following lines were written the day after our dear Mother's decease.

TO THE SWEET MEMORY OF MOTHER ADELAIDE PLANTE  
OF ST. GABRIEL.

'Twas the decline of a long summer's day;  
Hour after hour had slowly rolled away,  
And now the setting sun's rays lingering fell  
On tree and hillside, flowery knoll and dell,  
As loath to quit a world it made so bright,  
And yield its glorious place to sombre night.

An aged shepherd watched the peaceful scene,  
But chiefly, on his flock upon the green,  
Rested his tender, longing gaze; for there  
Was life, with love responding to his care.  
Full well his cheering voice each lambkin knew,  
Nor ever truant from the fold withdrew  
To perish in the wild; but, where he led,  
All followed, docile to the hand that bred.  
Now the long day was fading in the west;  
The aged shepherd knew his hour of rest  
Had come.—Beyond those portals wide,  
Where greener pastures laved a crystal tide,  
And flowers forever bloom, his place would be  
With his dear flock, from every ill set free.

How calm that scene! and now, mid convent shades,  
We 'll trace another ere the picture fades.

An aged nun awaits the peaceful close  
Of her long span of life : its sunset glows.  
Like that old shepherd, gazing on the west  
She longs to reach the land of endless rest :  
Beyond the crystal flood a rapturous sight,  
Her faith beholds.—It fills her with delight.  
“ When will He come, she cries, the God I love ?  
When shall I see His face in bliss above ?  
Faint is my heart with longing to possess  
My sovereign Good, my only happiness ! ”  
Thus, while our hearts were moved beyond control,  
Breathed she the ardors of her parting soul ;  
And still upon her flock in mourning near  
Would rest her loving eye, dimmed by a tear.

Mother beloved ! thy course so nearly run  
Brings to my mind that time when it begun.  
In early youth thy happy choice was made,  
At “ sweet-sixteen.” Within the cloister’s shade  
Thy years passed on, noiseless and without strife,  
But rich in merit on the Book of Life.  
How great was thy amaze thyself to find  
Called to high office ! In thy lowly mind  
E’er thou wast deemed unworthy of the last,  
Nor ceased to wonder how the votes were cast.  
In many hamlets thou hadst never seen,  
Thy name was known, “ the holy Ursuline ”,  
And through the breadth of Canada’s domain,  
Nay, far beyond, on rising hill, or plain,  
Where stands some humble chapel, there behold  
Our Mother’s gifts, precious tho’ not of gold.

The holy altar, how she loved to deck !  
And, silks and satins,—often fashion’s wreck—  
Her skilful fingers deftly would combine  
In vestures bright which costlier might outshine,  
Vases and brilliant flowers were next her care,  
And linen, white as snow, she must prepare ;  
In all, she thought of souls redeemed with Blood !  
Oh ! how she longed to pour that sacred flood  
O’er all the earth ! Such fire her heart consumed !  
Such love her daily sacrifice perfumed !

The cloister's inmates ever were her care ;  
And each was happy in her certain share  
Of that affection vast, that knew no bounds,  
More than the ocean which the earth surrounds.  
No weight of care or toil could dim the smile  
We loved to meet benignant, without guile.  
Her gentle words and kindness ever true  
Dispelled all doubts, inspiring ardor new.

'Twas Charity's own hand that led the way,  
And all is sweet beneath her gentle sway.  
Rejoice then, dearest Mother, in thy God !  
Thou didst pursue the path the Saints have trod ;  
A dazzling crown is thine, O Mother, now,  
And well doth it befit thy noble brow !  
Protect us still ; and from his glorious throne,  
Let Gabriel send his blessing with thy own.  
One day assembled on that happy shore,  
We'll praise with thee, our God, forevermore !

Feb. 28th, 1888.

### CHAPTER III

VERY REV. THOMAS MAGUIRE, VICAR GENERAL

CHAPLAIN OF THE MONASTERY DURING NINETEEN YEARS

The name of Rev. Thomas Maguire could not be omitted when treating of education in our convent schools on a preceding page ; but a further tribute of gratitude is due to the eminent services rendered the community during nearly twenty years by our devoted and excellent chaplain.

Father Maguire's family history carries us back to the days of the penal laws, when so many of Ireland's best and

bravest, preferring poverty and exile to wealth with apostasy, fled from the land of their birth, "the green Isle of Erin," to the distant but more hospitable shores of the American colonies.

The ancient and honorable Maguire family was represented among these exiles "for conscience' sake" by Mr. John Maguire, who having settled in Philadelphia, married there in 1773 Miss Margaret Shut, a respectable quaker's daughter.

Their eldest son, whom they named Thomas, was born, May 9th, 1774.

The struggle for Independence, then commencing, would have afforded the exile a good opportunity for avenging the wrongs his family had suffered under British rule; but the loyal Maguire preferred a second exile to revolt, although it were against the government which had driven him from the land of his birth. He retired from Philadelphia, and soon after found his loyalty rewarded by an appointment in the British Army at Halifax where he was granted the rank of Commissary General.

Faithful to his sovereign "for conscience, sake," John Maguire was ever the fearless and conscientious observer of his duties as a Catholic. The religious education of his children was his first concern, and no sooner was Thomas of an age to follow the course of studies in a college, than he was sent to the Seminary of Quebec, where his remarkable talents, his ardent temperament, his natural intelligence and love of study, enabled him to terminate the classical course at the age of eighteen. His choice of a state of life needed no long deliberation. What vocation but that of the priesthood could satisfy the aspirations of one whose heart was on fire with the love of God, with zeal for the extension of the faith and a boundless desire to contribute to the salvation of souls?

Even before his ordination (in 1799), his extraordinary abilities had attracted the notice and won the confidence of his ecclesiastical superiors, as may be inferred from his appointment before that date to the confidential post of Bishop's secretary.

A few years later (1806) the important parish of St. Michael, including Beaumont, was committed to his pastoral care with its various duties and great responsibilities. Never, perhaps, were the labors of a devoted pastor more fruitful or better appreciated. And what sweeter recompense could the Lord of the vineyard have reserved for his faithful steward, after the docility of his people through which the whole aspect of the parish had been changed than the conversion of his now widowed mother to the Catholic faith? This excellent lady, whose early convictions had been sincere and whose life had ever been most edifying, had the happiness to embrace our holy religion before leaving Halifax for St. Michael's, where she spent the remainder of her days with her sons, Rev. Thomas Maguire and Dr Charles Maguire who resided in that parish. Her death occurred in 1827, at the age of seventy-five years, and her ashes repose with those of Dr Maguire, since deceased, and several of his family, under the shadow of the cross, in the cemetery just near the church where her son Thomas had so often offered the holy Sacrifice to obtain the light of faith for his beloved mother.

After the immense services rendered in 1827 and the following years by Rev. Thomas Maguire in the college of St. Hyacinth where he is regarded almost as a second founder, after a journey to Rome in 1831 on business of high importance to the religious communities in Canada, his nomination, in 1832, to the office of chaplain of the Monastery was regarded by the nuns as one of the signal favors of divine Providence.

The new chaplain had hardly entered upon the duties of his charge, when he was required to undertake a second voyage to Europe, an event of less frequent occurrence in those days than in ours, on business equally confidential and of vast importance to the Church in Canada.

This time his absence was prolonged nearly two years, during which the interests of the convent, if secondary to his embassy, were no less faithfully attended to and promoted.

His letters to the Mother Superior and community enabled them to follow in spirit the intelligent traveller, now to the tomb of the Apostles beneath the vast dome of St. Peter's, where he offered the Holy Sacrifice with emotions too deep for words to describe; now to the ancient church of St. Agnes or to the hoary precincts of the Coliseum. Another day he returns from Naples, having visited the shrine of St. Philomena, and witnessed the wonders wrought at her tomb; or he writes still overpowered with emotion as he recounts the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius which he has witnessed six times, standing near the altar and examining with the coolness of a critic as well as the deep veneration of a Catholic. Other letters from Paris, where Mother St. Henry's beloved brother, Dr. McLaughlin, is ever ready to give substantial proofs of his affection as well as his liberality, in defraying whatever expenses may be incurred for the convent, enter into all the details of his purchases there: class-books, church ornaments, an organ for the chapel, a harp for the votaries of St. Cecilia.

Many of these letters, inimitable in delicacy of sentiment as well as in graceful diction, were addressed to the pupils, for the absent chaplain never lost sight of his relationship to the inmates of St. Ursula's cloister, and his chief enjoyment consisted in seeking to contribute to their pleasure, welfare, and happiness.

It was in this view that he visited the best educational establishments, the most flourishing boarding-schools, remarking whatever might be useful to his friends under the convent roof, keeping in mind that precious portion of the Master's vineyard which there await his vigilant and fostering care.

At last, the return of the interesting traveller was announced, and in August, 1834, his arrival awakened within the cloister such enthusiasm as could never be forgotten by those who witnessed or shared the rejoicings.

Entering immediately upon the duties of his charge, the devout and learned chaplain first concentrated the resources of his wisdom and his long experience upon the spiritual and temporal interests of the community confided to his direction. To maintain the strict observance of the rule and to preserve undiminished the spirit of the sainted Foundresses; to rescue the house from the depressed state of its finances, and to place the boarding-school upon the footing of the best institutions on either continent; such was the plan which his able hand had drawn out for himself, and which he ever pursued with ardor.

The financial difficulties were of olden date. They had commenced with the change of political government nearly eighty years previous, and had accumulated especially within a few years.

Long hours were passed in examining titles and properties, debts and spoliations, revenues and expenses, till there only remained to trace the path to a prosperous issue, through a practical system of economy and a prudent administration, to which the authorities of the house were most happy to subscribe.

The following address presented to Father Maguire on the feast-day of his patron St. Thomas shows with what enthu-



siasm the pupils loved to greet the venerable chaplain, whom they had learned to regard as incomparable for wisdom, learning, piety and zeal, as well as for devotedness to their interests and welfare. On this and on similar occasions, the address was followed by a song, and by a little dramatic entertainment suited to the season or the circumstance :

A FESTAL ADDRESS

(On the feast of St. Thomas of Canterbury, patron of our venerable chaplain.)

Heard ye that silvery strain of triumph ring?  
Saw ye, descending swift on radiant wing,  
That bright-robed angel? who's the victor now?  
—That glorious crown is for a martyr's brow!  
For thine, heroic son of Albion's Isle,  
Thou of the upright soul, devoid of guile!  
Illustrious Prelate, whose unblemished name  
Is wreath'd with laurels of immortal fame.  
Vainly did foes insult; their feeble rage  
Moved not the steady purpose of the sage.  
Let vile assassins come; he'll calmly wait,  
True to his trust, and firmly meet his fate.  
Oh! glorious fate, to give one's life for God!  
To hold the faith and seal it with one's blood.  
Ask Canterbury now who is her boast;  
Will she proud Henry show, and all his host,  
Or the meek martyr?

But wherefore call on heaven  
For bright examples holy men have given?  
Live there not still the just, the pure of heart,  
E'en as the Syrian cedar towers apart,  
Resists the storm, and casts a goodlier shade  
Where all the forest's pride is prostrate laid?  
Lives there not one whose merits we revere?  
Companions say: one whom our hearts hold dear,  
Whose cherished name is linked with all we love,  
With present joys and hopes of bliss above;

ONE who has taught our youthful minds to soar  
Above those pleasures wordlings vain adore?  
Yes, Reverend Father: and might we this day  
Attempt thy worth exalted to portray,  
What glowing imagery the muse should bring!  
How would the Convent's loudest echoes ring!  
But if the garland thus unformed we leave,  
A fairer wreath our grateful hearts shall weave,  
When, humbly bowed before the sacred shrine,  
We join thee at the mysteries divine!

Ursuline Convent, Dec. 28th, 1830.

The regularity and austerity of our chaplain's daily life would have suited a Carthusian, yet his vigorous frame and excellent health seemed not to suffer from the privations and constraint to which he subjected himself. A benevolent smile ever lit up his venerable countenance, encouraging the timid and winning the confidence even of little children.

The youngest members of the community as well as the elders, were ever received with that perfect urbanity which inspires assurance while it checks familiarity. It was a privilege to be sent on a message to our Father's room. On appearing at his wicket, he never failed to reward the intrusion upon his solitude by some sprightly remark or amiable repartee which revealed the habitual cheerfulness of his hermit-life.

In the direction of souls, our venerated Father exercised a rare discernment, and while some were urged with a certain vehemence to press on with greater alacrity in the narrow path that leads to perfection, others, more timid, more in need of encouragement, would listen with comfort to words which St. Francis of Sales might have addressed to his Philothea on the love of God.

The eminent sacerdotal virtues of the Vicar General, his integrity of life and exalted worth are sufficiently proved by

the confidence placed in him by his ecclesiastical superiors, and the veneration in which he was held by all classes of society ; but the inmates of the Monastery may claim to have known him intimately only to esteem him more highly, as they witnessed from year to year the wonderful spectacle of a life of total self-abnegation, a life consecrated, in its highest sense, to the service of God.

From four o'clock in the morning till ten at night, the duties of the day succeeded each other with uninterrupted uniformity ; from the confessional to the altar, from the daily walk down Donnacona Street, or perhaps to the Seminary, back to the quiet of his plain apartment, when writing or business for the convent, but chiefly prayer, marked the passing hours, the months, the years, till our venerable friend and Father, still erect in frame and agile in gait, had seen his eightieth birthday.

Thus had nineteen years sent up their safe account to heaven, when a severe attack of illness on the 18th of July, 1854, suddenly changed all the scene.

Death had laid his icy hand upon the form which age had not bowed, and bore away the unresisting victim within the space of thirty-six hours ; but not before the holy priest had called to his aid the sacred rites he had piously administered to so many others. These he now received with the simplicity of a child, and as the end drew near, he clasped his crucifix to his breast, and pressing to his lips the medal of the Blessed Virgin, he softly murmured the invocation it bears : " O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us." That simple act bore witness to the childlike faith of a great soul ; " of such are the kingdom of heaven."

Thus lived and labored among us that eminent ecclesiastic, whose vast erudition rendered him a competent judge of the

most intricate questions ; whose credit and ability had been employed in negotiating matters of the highest importance to the Church in Canada, and, who before his appointment to the charge of chaplain of the Ursuline monastery, had thrice refused the pastoral staff and mitre.

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## CHAPTER IV

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### IN MEMORY OF OUR JUBILARIANS AFTER 1839

If the royal Prophet has declared that " one day in the courts of the Lord is better than a thousand years in the tent of sinners," what may not be said of the merit and happiness of spending so long a period as fifty or sixty years in the " House of the Lord " and in His holy service ?

The convent register at this period, between the dates of 1839 and 1889, presents us with the names of twenty-three nuns who attained the measure of the Golden Jubilee of religious profession. Seven of these lived to celebrate the 60th anniversary of their consecration in the monastery ; while one, our beloved Mother St. Gabriel, prolonged her vigorous existence to the seventy-second year of her religious profession.

By a singular coincidence, twenty of these Sisters destined to live their half century each, entered the convent successively, were admitted to profession and maintained their ranks unbroken till each in turn had celebrated her Golden Jubilee.

First on the list of the jubilee celebrations after 1839 appears the name of Mother Françoise Giroux des Anges,

born in 1768, who in 1847, had attained the sixtieth anniversary of her profession.

Her reputation as a skilful florist, an artist of unrivalled skill in gilding, was at its height in the early part of the century, while her zeal for the strict observance of the rule, for the psalmody of the divine office and for Gregorian chant in which she excelled, continued to characterize her even when her advanced age no longer permitted her the success of former years. Prayer and labor rendered her useful to the community and agreeable in the sight of Heaven to the end of her mortal existence in 1849.

Mothers St. Helen, St. Elizabeth and St. Athanasius were sister-novices who pronounced their vows on the same day in 1810, and whose religious career might be summed up in three words: fervent piety, fidelity to rule, meekness and charity.

Mother St. Helen's chief services in the monastery have been mentioned already; those of her companions must not be totally omitted. Miss Sophie Rose Fiset, whose honorable family resided in Quebec, was educated in our classes from her earliest years, and entered our novitiate at the age of seventeen. Humble, laborious and exemplary in piety, her life in the community was like the course of the modest streamlet, which noiselessly pursues its way, attracting little notice, yet bearing blessings to everything within its reach. To oblige her Sisters by her charitable assistance, to offer prayers for them and for all the living or dead, seemed to be quite naturally her duty as it was her delight. When after a long illness her end drew near, and she was warned of the approach of death, her quiet answer was: "The Lord be praised! I long to see my God and to be with Him forever."

Another jubilee celebration was that of Mother St. Athanasius in 1861, repeated for the 60th anniversary in 1871,

four years before her decease, at the age of eighty-seven. Of the long and fruitful labors of this aged Mother some mention has been made in the preceding pages. In the later years of this venerable octagenarian, when with the feeble frame, the faculties of the mind were also weakened, it was a subject of remark and admiration to find the dear old Mother ever engaged in prayer, yet offering by a sign and a smile to lay aside her book to receive her welcome visitor. Her memory seemed to have retained none but the most agreeable images. Each day was for her the recurrence of some happy feast or anniversary, and if any one objected that it was not altogether a fine day, she was quickly answered that "the clouds were breaking and the sun would soon shine in all its splendor." Happy illusions, which were clearly the mark of peace of mind and passions subdued.

The two Catherines, Mothers St. Ursula and St. Agnes, "united in life, in death were not long divided."

Born in 1794, and during their early years strangers to each other, these two pious young ladies entered the novitiate at the same age and pronounced their vows together on the 15th of May, 1818. The end of their long career of eighty-five years parted them only for the space of three months; it was in 1880. They had celebrated together both the golden and the diamond jubilee of their profession.

Mother Catherine Couture of St. Ursula was a native of St. Joseph's parish, Point Levi; Mother Catherine Côté of St. Agnes, belonged to the parish of St. Augustine, both of these lovely villages being quite near the city of Quebec. Apart from these coincidences of names and dates, each of these dear Mothers is remembered by her own peculiar characteristics and personality.

Until the age of nineteen, Miss Catherine Couture had no thought of entering a convent. Pressed to give her consent to another vocation, it then first occurred to her that a choice of a state of life was a serious matter, and she realized the necessity of taking time for prayer and reflection. In order to have an opportunity of judging of the nature of the religious state, while she would complete her studies, she passed a year and a half in our boarding-school, and there decided to consecrate her life to God as an Ursuline.

That this was a happy choice, all who lived with her might bear witness. During her long and useful career she was ever the treasure and the joy of her community. In whatever office she was employed, whether as assistant-superior, mistress general, infirmarian or seamstress, her charity was conspicuous over every other quality and perfection. It was in the exercise of this godlike virtue that her good heart found its delight and its proper element. The institute was the object of her special predilection. For the welfare of the pupils, their progress in virtue, she still offered her sufferings, her sacrifices and her prayers when age and infirmities no longer permitted her to labor among them. Such is the memory dear Mother St. Ursula left us, when in 1879, at the age of eighty-five, she passed away from our midst to join the angelic choirs.

Mother St. Agnes comes to our mind as the personification of humility, diligence and fervor, in short, as the type of the interior life. Her health was ever delicate, but sufficed to carry her through the daily duties assigned in the various offices confided to her during her long and laborious existence. Not a moment of time wasted, not the slightest delay in obeying the signal which calls to the different observances in the course of the day, not a useless word infringing upon the sacred hour of silence; these were the outward signs of

the interior life of Mother St. Agnes. Who can reckon the amount of merit thus acquired during the space of sixty-six years spent in the monastery?

It was a goodly sight to behold these two venerable mothers receiving the congratulations their sisters offered, as is usual on such occasions, by that angelic group of little children, the first communicants. It was, besides, the delightful month of May, when the return of spring with verdure and flowers, the song of birds and new life every where attune the mind to joy and piety. Long years after, when the realities and perhaps the trials and sorrows of life, have effaced many of the joyous impressions of youth, the little ones who have figured in these convent scenes, now changed to sober matrons, recall with pleasure the name of the jubilarians they have crowned, and the companions whose voices mingled with theirs in the song of greeting.

We shall here merely mention the name of the jubilarian crowned in 1878, Mother Abigail Barber of St. Francis Xavier, at the age of sixty-seven, still youthful in appearance after a lifetime almost spent in convents. Our readers will meet this gentle nun, whose ambition was to merit the title of "Mary's lamb," in the story of the Barber family.

Mother St. John's name in her family was Anne McDonald; she was a younger sister of Mother Isabella McDonald of St. Andrew, whose memory, as our readers know, is ever cherished among us. Admitted to the novitiate in 1821, she found her happiness in the religious life for the next three score years, outliving her beloved sister by a score, and leaving us at her decease as a sweet legacy the bright example of her holy life.

Gentle and forbearing, as attentive to oblige others as she was forgetful of herself, her heart ever burning with the love



of God and of her neighbor, Mother St. John found daily occasions for the exercise of multiplied acts of these sublime virtues in the various offices she was called to fill. Her success in the management of a class was not in proportion to her desire for the improvement of her little pupils. Too great a diffidence in the exercise of authority is quickly perceived by the young who, while they take advantage of it, will wisely declare that "the mistress is too good."

Many years she was employed as mistress-general of the day-school, where by her kindness and longanimity, she won the confidence of both parents and children, while by her prayers she no doubt contributed to the cause of education doubly by drawing down the blessing of Heaven upon the labor of other teachers.

Humble as a child and as docile to the voice of her superiors, Mother St. John was a pattern of fervor and of exactitude to all our religious observances. So efficacious was her spirit of faith and so tender was her piety, that in the acute sufferings of her last illness, nothing so surely brought her relief as an invocation to the Sacred Heart, a prayer in honor of the Sacred Wounds, or the sight of the crucifix.

Her willing soul took its flight to the bosom of God, January 18th, 1888, at the age of eighty-three years. She had completed the fiftieth year of her profession in November, 1878, but in the excess of her lowly aspirings, she had appealed to her superior, and obtained as a favor that there would be none of the rejoicings usual in the community on such occasions, only "the prayers and offering of a general communion for which she would be most grateful."

Our first group of jubilarians might end here with Mother St. John; but another name deservedly dear presents itself for a brief notice. It is that of Miss Christine Vermette, in religion Mother St. Angela, who, had her dear life been pro-

longed only a few months more, would have also attained her jubilee anniversary of profession.

Miss Vermette belonged to the city of Quebec, where her father Mr. François Vermette supported his family honorably in the calling of a merchant. Christine, on leaving the convent, was soon introduced into society and at first relished the frivolous pleasures of gay soirées as do most young girls. More than once however, after the vain pageant was over, she had regretted the quiet enjoyments of her school days, the peace and restfulness of her convent-home. On one occasion, when the giddy dance and light conversation had worn the whole night away, her carriage drove past the convent as the heavy four o'clock bell rang its loud peal, calling the nuns from their peaceful slumbers to begin the day by prayer. Like another young lady whom we have mentioned, this young girl was awakened by that bell to serious reflections. Her night had been wasted in vain amusements which, promising pleasure, had left her exhausted and listless. The nuns from their night's rest had arisen refreshed and ready for the holy labors which would merit a reward in heaven.

These reflections were not the simple result of that passing disgust which often succeeds immoderate enjoyment. They were rather the prelude to a serious discussion of the great questions: "For what end has God created me, and how may I best attain that end?" In her case Miss Vermette found the response to be the same as was once addressed by Our Lord to the young man who enquired: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"—"Leave all thou hast and follow me."

A few months later the young girl obeyed the summons, and entering the novitiate of the Ursulines, prepared to follow the footsteps of their Foundress, even as that heroic soul had followed those of Our Lord.

Was it by a special favor that the postulant, born in 1808, the year that St. Angela was canonized, obtained the privilege of bearing her name when taking the veil in 1827? Of this there is no proof, but we can bear witness to her special devotion to her holy patroness, as well as to our Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation. These names were often on her lips, when as directress of the boarding-school or as mistress-general, she inculcated their holy maxims or invited her pupils to emulate the saintly examples of these patronesses of the order.

Mother St. Angela, fully imbued with the spirit of Angela of Brescia, loved to form her youthful charge to the fervent practice of their religious duties and the virtues that should adorn a Christian maiden. Not a few of her pupils were called to follow her example by entering the religious state, and others, settled in the world, lived the holy and edifying lives of truly Christian women.

Mother St. Angela, however, had been chosen by divine Providence for another mission, that of patient suffering. During nearly half of her life in the community, through debility and ill health, she was debarred the sweet privilege attending in the choir, or following the common rule. At one time, when her sufferings had brought her to the verge of the grave, her health was suddenly restored, in answer to the united prayers of the nuns and pupils who had had recourse to the intercession of our Venerable Mother to obtain this favor. Never had our good Sister been so strong and healthy as she was during the two following years. But her normal state was destined to be that of a victim of suffering. Therefore, after the recovery of her health had been fully tested, another malady was sent which, after procuring her daily and hourly occasions of increasing her merits by patient and loving endurance, opened for her at length the gates of the city of

rest, on the 29th of April, 1879. Mother St. Angela had been successfully employed many years in teaching as well as in the offices of novice-mistress, directress of the boarding-school and mistress-general. In all these offices her invaluable kindness, her persevering efforts to benefit the souls of those under her charge, her cheerfulness and pious conversation made an indelible impression, and won her the deserved meed of affection and gratitude.

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## CHAPTER V

1839-1842

### MOTHER ST. ANDREW'S NOVICES

We have already set before our readers the statistics of the Monastery in 1839, and now we are prepared to examine what promise of future property is to be found in the novitiate of that period.

Only four professed choir-sisters, with three white-veiled candidates destined to perseverance, appear on that brief catalogue of Mother St. Andrew's novices. On the other hand, only one was taken young from the field of her labors; the others generously devoted long years to the instruction of youth, or sought to promote otherwise the best interests of the house, according to the talents bestowed upon them for this end by divine Providence.

The first upon the list is Sister Cécile Michaud, professed in 1835, with her gifted companion, Sister St. Thomas Burke. The others in their rank of profession were: Sister St. Frs. de Borgia Dechesne (1836); Sister St. Philomena Kelly Mur-

phy (1838); Sister Aloysius Dechesne (1840); Sister Ste. Croix Holmes (1840), and Sister Winifride Deligny, professed in 1841.

Sister Josephine Michaud of St. Cecilia, and her two cousins Emilie and Eliza Dechesne, were nieces of Mother St. Henry McLaughlin, and allied through their relatives to the best society in Quebec. Their parents resided in Kamouraska. During their school life they had frequent opportunities of forming acquaintances in the city, which in those days united civic and military splendors, as well as attractions and dangers of which it has been shorn in great measure by ceasing to be the capital of all Canada.

Their exit from society excited much comment, and their choice of the seclusion of the cloister was far from meeting the approval of their relatives.

Within the convent however, where their sentiments and aptitudes were better known and appreciated, the event had been foreseen and provided for in the special care bestowed upon the cultivation of their talents, destined to be consecrated to the service of religion. While the young nuns were taking lessons in drawing and painting from an American artist,<sup>1</sup> recommended to our Superior by high authority, these young ladies were admitted to share the same advantages as the cloister artists of those times.

But these are things of the past, the "long ago." Not only the three cousins, but their companions, all that happy group of novices, with one solitary exception, have passed away. That lone survivor has still fresh in her memory each of those beloved Sisters by whose exemplary life she has been edified, and on whose tomb she ventures to place this little tribute

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1—Mr. Bowman, of Philadelphia, a convert, recommended by Bishop Fenwick, 1824.

of affection, by introducing them one by one to her readers, following the order of their "passing away."

Miss Eliza Dechesne, the youngest of the three cousins, entered the novitiate in 1837. Her profession took place, March 16th, 1840, in company with a young convert to the faith, whose baptism and first communion she had witnessed four years previous.

Very Rev. Felix Cazeau addressed the happy novices in an eloquent and touching exhortation, founded on the words addressed to Abraham, when called by the Almighty to quit the land of Ur. The text which the sacred orator proved to be applicable to the young candidates before him was the following :

"Go forth out of thy country and thy kindred, and from thy father's house, and come into the land which I shall show thee." (Gen. XII, I).

Miss Dechesne had chosen for her patron St. Aloysius Gonzaga, and like that angelic youth won her crown within the brief space of four years after her profession.

The messenger sent to bear her to the tomb was a pulmonary affection which declared itself a few months previous to the close of her noviceship.

Without regret she resigned her pure soul into the hands of Him who gave it, leaving her Sisters to mourn her the more sincerely that her amiability and tender piety had drawn closer around their hearts the sweet ties of sympathy and fraternal charity.

Made perfect in so brief a space,  
And crowned so young : O, precious grace,  
Worthy of envy ! Sister dear,  
'Tis not for thee, this falling tear,  
Thrice happy thou ! but ah ! how lone,  
My pathway to that blessed throne,

Where faith and hope rest satisfied,  
O'erwhelmed in love's all blissful tide.  
Extend thy care from yon bright shore,  
To aid the lingering footsteps sore  
Of one whose course in nearly run ;  
The shadows lengthen with the setting sun.

Miss Emilie Dechesne's vocation had been decided upon only after mature and serious deliberation, during which the world's alluring promises, as well as its vain threats, were "weighed in the balance" and found unworthy to be compared with the invitations and gracious promises of the Spouse of virgins.

On taking the veil in 1836 and adopting the name of St. Francis of Borgia, the fervent novice had determined to offer the Almighty a true holocaust by regulating her whole life in strict conformity with her sacred engagements.

The natural vivacity of her temperament she moderated by interior recollection, carefully reserving for the hour of recreation the sallies of wit and humor which rendered her conversation so engaging. A remarkable facility for self-control, generosity in self-sacrifice, joined to a solid piety and some experience of the world, rendered her an able directress of the senior division of boarders, an office which she filled till transferred for six years to the department of the half-boarders, and thence in 1860 to the novitiate as mistress of novices.

Her skill in drawing and painting was exercised not only in teaching these branches, but also in copying from good models many of the holy pictures with which the monastery is now enriched. It was especially her delight to contribute to the good work, pursued through many years by that noble French priest<sup>1</sup>, who brought into Canada valuable paintings,

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1—L. G. Desjardins, Superior of the Monastery from 1825 to 1833.

rescued in a damaged state from among the ruins left by the revolutionary destroyers. These paintings, carefully mended and skilfully retouched, were eagerly sought for, serving as an embellishment of the altar in many a church throughout the country.

Among the pupils, Sister St. Borgia exerted the happiest influence through her superior talent for imparting religious instruction. As an example of her zeal in forming the pupils to the practice of true piety, we must mention the establishment of the Sodalties of the Children of Mary and the Holy Angels, as well as that of the Holy Childhood, all of which were introduced while she was first directress of the boarders.

These sodalties, which we shall have occasion to mention again, were the cherished objects of Sister St. Borgia's solicitude, and an unfailing source of consolation amid the incessant labors of her charge. Often she was heard to say, congratulating herself upon the part she had taken in establishing the sodality of the Holy Childhood: "It is upon the souls of these thousands of baptized infants that I count, to be escorted safe to heaven in spite of all my failings."

The year 1866, already so cruelly saddened by the death of dear Mother St. Andrew, had other days of sorrow in store for us. Sister St. Borgia's health had been on the decline for the past two years. An obstinate cough, with other symptoms of consumption had frequently reduced the courageous mother-mistress to the necessity of moderating her zeal in following the observances. The month of April found her at the infirmary. The 6th of June witnessed her last act of resignation and her tranquil departure for the land of the blest, in the fifty second year of her age, and the thirtieth of her religious profession.



Miss Josephine Michaud had sought admittance to the novitiate in 1833, at the age of twenty.

Endowed with great energy of character, she embraced the practices of religious life with an ardor, which, after rendering her a model of piety and exactitude, continued to distinguish her throughout her long and laborious career. Her daily life was not only a living rule, but, indeed, often far exceeded the rule by its austerily and lengthened hours of prayer. Her chief difficulties lay, not in the exercise of obedience or humility, which were her favorite virtues, but rather in the obligation to direct others and make them submit to authority, whether among the pupils, where she was long employed, or in the offices of assistant and mistress-general. If her labors in the class-room were rendered more difficult for herself by her own temperament, they were not the less meritorious, nor were they less appreciated.

Her golden jubilee of profession, in 1885, brought her abundant evidence of the affectionate and grateful remembrance of her former pupils in the many congratulations and offerings she received on that auspicious occasion.

Like her cousin, Sister St. Borgia, her artistic talents had enabled her to produce some good oil-paintings, which will long serve to remind the community of her own example of a holy life, as well as of the saints whose portraits she has left us. Whatever occupation was confided to her received the attention she would have given to an order from our Blessed Lord Himself. Thus it was that whatever came from her hands was found perfect. The same principle had taught her the diligent employment of her time, neatness and order, which she almost carried to an excess, as well as the careful observance of even the minutest dictates of the rule or of charity. Such, is the picture evoked by the name of Mother St. Cecilia; joined to the remembrance of her habit-

ual state of suffering of which she never complained, but rather was unwilling to admit when compassionated by others and exhorted to repose.

Even when attacked by a hemorrhage of the lungs which was to be followed in less than a week by her death, she could with difficulty be persuaded to retire to the infirmary.

The poor, worn frame could resist no longer; it sank under this last stroke. The tottering edifice crumbled swiftly, yet not with a violent shock. It seemed the "dissolving of the body to be with Christ", which as St. Paul declares, "is far better," and we laid our dear sister beside the other departed ones, all in their last sleep, awaiting the resurrection, when the "corruptible will put on the incorruptible," and death will be exchanged for immortality.

The next in that group of novices, named in the order of their departure, is Miss Lucie Deligny, known in the Convent as Sister St. Winifride. It is a name linked with pleasant memories for all who lived with that gentle, retiring, low-voiced Sister, whose emblem for hidden worth and excellence would be the costly pearl lying far down in the depths of the sea. With a casual observer, Sister St. Winifride might have passed for a person of ordinary abilities and perhaps inferior merit, but in the intimacy of convent life, the daily intercourse of sisters, the deepest veil of humility and reserve becomes transparent.

Silent and unobtrusive, yet ready and competent for every charge; as alert to oblige and render service as she was careful to avoid giving trouble or inconvenience, Sister St. Winifride was at once an example and an exhortation in the novitiate.

The pupils to whom her lucid explanations unfolded the intricacies of mathematics or French syntax, rendering those

studies both easy and attractive, were not the last to discover and appreciate the abilities of their excellent teacher.

In the office of second mistress of the senior department of boarders her acute discernment of character, as well as her invincible longanimity became conspicuous ; but her services were required in another office, and during the rest of her too brief existence, her assistance as aid-depositary relieved dear Mother St. Gabriel of nearly all the labor and anxiety entailed by that important position.

It is a remark of Father Faber that sickness affords a true revelation of character ; that friends are often amazed at the treasure of affection, piety or devotion discovered where years of close relationship had never brought it to light.

Thus it was with beloved Sister St. Winifride, whose habitual reserve and apparent reticence now expanded like the fragrance of a rose, attracting to her bedside each loving Sister with her gentle invitation to "come again," or to "stay longer," an invitation which each affectionate visitor was only too happy to accept.

Sister St. Winifride was the daughter of Mr. François Deligny, a respectable merchant of Quebec ; her mother's maiden name was Genevieve Drolet. She had entered the novitiate at the age of seventeen, after having been five years a boarder. When her death occurred on the 6th of March, 1867, she filled the office of first Depositary. She had labored in the vineyard of the Lord nearly thirty years, and had lived to the age of forty-seven.

Sister Catherine Burke and Sister Mary Catherine Kelly-Murphy were not born in the Emerald Isle, yet were they of Irish parentage and disposition. These two gifted young ladies met as sister-novices under the guidance of Mother St. Andrew in 1836.

To the sympathy of race and of congenial tastes and sentiments, were now added the stronger ties of sisterhood, the long intimacy of the religious life, with its similarity of pursuits, enjoyments and sacrifices.

Miss Catherine Burke, who bore in religion the name of Sister St. Thomas, frequented our extern school at an early age, her parents having removed to Quebec from Newfoundland, where our future Ursuline was born, March 7th, 1814.

In the boarding-school her progress was as rapid as her talents were remarkable. Invited to spend a few months at Rivière du Loup, in the family of Miss Josephine Michaud, her friend and future companion in the novitiate, the enjoyments of that summer in the country were never forgotten, nor the scenes of Canadian home-life, with which she there became familiar. Many a page of her *Histoire des Ursulines* bears witness to the vivid pictures of peasant-cottage or seignorial-manor with which the writer's youthful imagination had been impressed.

During some fifteen years after her profession, Sister St. Thomas engaged in teaching, cultivated with success the talents of her pupils, at the same time that her own improvement in literary studies was preparing her to write of the house she loved so enthusiastically. Circumstances entirely unforeseen awaited to widen her experience. A journey across the continent, as will be noted elsewhere, with a seven years' residence in an Ursuline convent during the arduous period of its first foundation, contributed no doubt to inspire the design, and aid in the accomplishment of this work, which required literary powers and a clear judgment, as well as a masterful love of the "Old Monastery."

After her return from the South, while resting from the labors which had greatly impaired her health, Sister St. Thomas, with the approbation of her Superiors, silently

gathered from various sources, and gave form to the amount of historical, legendary and miscellaneous information contained in the four volumes of the " *Histoire des Ursulines de Québec* ".

In 1864 the first volume was under press. By the advice of Rev. Geo. L. Lemoine, our excellent chaplain, the work had been reviewed and had received some additional pages, introducing more of the history of Canada collaterally with that of the Monastery, " with which, according to the remark of Sir Etienne Taché, it is so intimately linked." In all this labor, Mother St. Mary, being freely consulted, lent as freely her aid and concurrence.

Mother St. Thomas at " three-score and ten " was yet light in her movements, clear in her faculties, and sprightly in her repartees as she had been in her younger days. Her piety had only become more marked and tender, her charity, if possible more delicate and expansive, her abnegation and self-control more complete. Her motherly features alone told of age; but the hour of a final departure was silently nearing, and after a short illness and a peaceful preparation, for the great change, on the 20th of January, 1885, the loss of a beloved sister was wept by the afflicted community; while in the courts above another faithful soul was welcomed to her eternal reward.

Sister St. Philomena, whose name we have coupled with that of Sister St. Thomas entered the novitiate in January 1836, at the age of sixteen. Her double family name, Murphy-Kelly, demands an explanation.

In the early part of the present century, there lived in Hanover Street, Boston an elderly couple, wealthy but without children, Mr. and Mrs. Kelly. In the neighborhood dwelt another Irish family, of the name of Murphy,

whose youngest girl, a rosy-cheeked cherub of three summers, with golden ringlets and soft blue eyes, had attracted Mrs. Kelly's notice from day to day, till the good lady felt she could give all her fortune to possess such a child as her own.

That little girl's respectable parents were not rich in this world's goods, and when Mrs. Kelly offered to adopt that wee one, and provide for it as if it were her own, on condition only that it should bear the name of Mary Kelly, instead of Catherine Murphy, they thought it a providential event, even as it proved. Little Mary, at her tender age, hardly noticed the change, and soon learned to love her benefactress as her own mother, though later nature asserted its rights, and she never forgot the first love due to her real parents and family.

After having placed her in the Ursuline convent of Mount Benedict at the age of five, her parents of adoption had both gone to their reward before the time of her first communion. Mrs. Kelly had outlived her husband, and nobly kept the promise of providing for the little one she had adopted, leaving her an ample provision for her future maintenance, whatever might be the state of life she would embrace.

In conformity to the will of her benefactress, Miss Kelly continued her studies under the able teachers in the convent of Mount Benedict and grew up an accomplished young lady, without lessening the piety and candor of her early years. That nothing might be wanting in the education of his ward, whose progress was remarkable, and whose talents for music were of a high order, her guardian, H. Derby, Esq., of Boston, desired to give her the advantage of taking lessons in French in a convent where the language was habitually spoken. Miss Kelly was accordingly sent to Canada, the convent of the Sisters of the Congregation in Montreal having been selected from motives of convenience for the journey.

Thus it was that the gentle young girl was spared the riotous scenes that attended the destruction of the beloved convent where she had spent so many happy years.

After a few months in Montreal, Miss Kelly returned to her Ursuline Mothers, who driven from their peaceful retreat had taken refuge with their Sisters of Quebec.

Already she had reflected deeply, and had resolved to consecrate her life to God in the religious state. Before the close of the year she decided to ask her admission to the novitiate in the Old Monastery.

The pupils of that New Year's day, 1836, were not a little startled with the discovery that their aimable young companion had quitted their ranks and now wore the white cap and black silk scarf of a postulant.

Three months later they assisted at her reception of the veil and habit of an Ursuline, under which garb they fancied she looked still more graceful and angelic than ever on that occasion, veiled and arrayed in white as on the day of her first Communion.

When Sister St. Philomena, as she will henceforth be called, assumed the rank of teacher among those who had lately been her companions, her quiet dignity and lady-like demeanor insured their ready submission and respect. In the department of music especially her services were long and unwearyed. To train those young voices to sing the praise of their Creator, to move their hearts to piety through the influence of sacred anthems, harmonized by the great masters ; to enhance the solemnity of the different Church festivals by the skilful combination of all the instruments at her disposal and thus to procure the glory of God and the good of souls, was the height of her ambition. In teaching music, her tact in imparting to her pupils the ease and self-

reliance requisite for success was evidently the result of her own invincible patience, of her perfect calm and self-possession.

Ever gentle and considerate, ever seeking to implant in the ready soil of youthful hearts the love of God and the love of duty, how deeply must these saving principles have been implanted in her own heart to have sustained her, ever cheerful and ever ready for every sacrifice through the long labors of fifty years, chiefly devoted to teaching music! The mention of fifty years will remind her former pupils of the bright celebration of her golden jubilee. It is not to be omitted, but only reserved to its proper date.

## CHAPTER VI

### PIOUS ASSOCIATIONS INTRODUCED

#### THE HOLY CHILDHOOD. ST. ANGELA'S CHURCH IN CHINA

In connection with the name of Mother Dechesne of St. Francis of Borgia we have mentioned the pious association of the Holy Childhood. This appeal to children in behalf of abandoned infants in heathen countries originated in France, in 1843, through the zeal of the illustrious Bishop of Nancy, Count Forbin-Janson.

It would be superfluous to explain here that the objects of the society are to reserve and baptize children in danger of death; to bring up in Christian families or in convents the survivors, and to found establishments where some of these children can be trained to become catechists, teachers or apostles among their countrymen.



It was the last crowning work of the venerable prelate's apostolic life, and was rapidly propagated through the Catholic countries of Europe. Among the numerous associates, princes and princesses of the royal Houses of Belgium, Spain and Austria inscribed their names while they sent in their munificent donations.

Canada was not slow in adopting a society instituted by a saintly bishop, whose eloquence had irresistibly moved her populations wherever he had passed. In Quebec, pious ladies welcomed it and established it on so firm a basis, that it has now passed its jubilee anniversary without ever failing to send to the central directory its annual offering, including that of the pupils of the Ursulines.

The first president of the Holy Childhood in Quebec was Mrs. Vital Têtu, 1841. The first remittance from the associates in the convent was the result of an ingenious expedient, suggested by their first directress Mother St. Borgia.

It was the year when young ladies in the city had discovered the beauty of *embroidered muslin aprons*. Suddenly it became fashionable in the convent. The swiftest fingers were put in requisition to furnish the elegant article, which proved the more saleable from the certainty that the proceeds would be devoted to the work of the new society. When all had been supplied with aprons, other articles of daily wear were found indispensable; wrappers of which the supply ever seemed insufficient, collars of various styles and patterns. Among the half-boarders, a lottery had been organized, and some pretty articles had been offered to raffle. In short, success had crowned the efforts of the associates, and taught them the pleasures of beneficence.

The following year, at the request of the ladies who directed the Society in the city, and with the promise of their concurrence as guardians, the pupils of the Ursulines held a "Chil-

dren's Bazaar," in one of the halls at the St. Louis Hotel, where was realized the sum of over four hundred dollars, The young ladies from the Convent who particularly distinguished themselves by their zeal and generosity were the following: Miss Caroline Nault (later Mrs. Ernest Gagnon), Miss Clorinde Mondelet (Mrs. Judge Routhier), Miss Amélie Duchesnay (Mrs. A. Lindsay), Miss Margaret O'Brien (Sister St. Joseph of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary), and Miss Mary Boxer, an amiable Protestant young lady.

Every thing had passed off to the satisfaction of all the parties concerned in its success; nevertheless, it was not deemed expedient to repeat the experiment, from which some inconveniences might naturally be apprehended.

To organize within the convent a bazar with its various attractions, its useful and fancy articles, its tables of refreshments, its raffles, its fish-pond, &c., and this without inviting other purchasers than the pupils daily in attendance, was another expedient which has been repeatedly and successfully adopted. At other times a concert or a literary and musical entertainment is prepared, in order to provide an offering for the Holy Childhood or other works of charity, for the pupils are taught to patronize other Societies besides that of their predilection.

These lotteries, bazaars, and entertainments have their charms, as deviations from the routine of school-life, while their financial success becomes a new source of pleasing excitement. From year to year the annual contribution of the pupils, keeping pace with their zeal for the Association of the Holy Childhood, has varied from one hundred and sixty to two hundred dollars.

Another means of augmenting the pecuniary resources of the society, and one which is for many reasons preferred to

all the others, is that of a collection taken up during the holy mass offered for the associates and their work. This festival, announced at the Cathedral on a Sunday in the month of May, takes place on a week-day. It is *la fête des petites*, the feast of the little ones. Two of the smallest among these little ones, boarders and half-boarders, are selected to take up the collection. It is an event in their little lives, one to be remembered when it will be their turn to give, rather than to receive. The older pupils, suddenly invested with the right to bestow alms, handle their purses with becoming dignity, and listen with pleasure to the chink of the falling coins as the little collectors pass through their ranks. Meanwhile, the holy sacrifice proceeds, and pious hymns accompany the Offertory, till the tinkle of the bell gives warning of the most solemn moment of mass, for which the best preparation is the silent prayer of the humble worshipper.

A few moments later, our little collectors are again seen gliding through the ranks of the congregation in the exterior church, where are assembled their mothers, their elder sisters, and other pious ladies. The little purses are filled again for the last time. Mass is over, and means have been provided for the zealous catechist in a far-off pagan land to pursue his labor of love by purchasing for a few cents the right to prolong the life, or if too late for that, to open heaven, for an infant abandoned by its own parents.

Let us now explain by what means a church at Tsi-zé-ié, China, has been erected and dedicated to St. Angela.

A missionary, after laboring many years in the Celestial Empire, required rest; he was sent by his superiors to Canada, and came to Quebec. But the Jesuit Father Vasseur did not forget the poor neophytes who mourned his absence.

In their interest, he still exerted himself, and willingly entertained the nuns and their pupils by graphic descriptions of that world apart called China.

Details of a most interesting kind, important concessions obtained, whole villages asking for catechists to instruct them, difficulties surmounted and dangers that threatened; the good missionary speaking from the fulness of his apostolic heart could not fail to reach the hearts of his audience. Especially were they moved, when they beheld in spirit the divine mysteries celebrated by the missionary in an open boat on the great Imperial Canal, while from other boats surrounding his, would be heard the morning prayers, the profession of faith, or the commandments, chanted in unison by these recently converted Christians, assembled in so strange a place to hear Mass.

"They have no church, not even a roof beneath which the missionary might find a shelter for the holy altar! Yet the cost of a pretty church, all tapestried with tablets on which even the pagans might read the great truths of religion, would not exceed a thousand dollars."

"A thousand dollars! why, such a sum might be reached in a few years by doubling the proceeds of our annual concert or bazaar."

A few days later the offer was made in due form, on condition that the church would be named after the foundress of the Ursulines, St. Angela.

Henceforward the treasurers of the Holy Childhood economized, until the stipulated amount having been realized, in 1876, it was placed in the hands of Father Vasseur, and by him transmitted to the Superior of the Foreign Missions in Paris. A letter from Rev. Father Royer, the missionary stationed at Tsi-zé-ié, to whom the offering of a thousand

dollars had been sent, was addressed to the Mother Superior in September 1877. After explaining the situation of Tsi-zé-ié, a borough about fifty miles east of the city of Tchan-chen, he continues :

“ Since ten years the poor Christians of this borough were praying for a foothold where they might assemble, and where the missionary might find a roof to shelter his head. Last year I was still saying mass in an open boat, each time I came to this place. I promised a novena of masses in honor of St. Joseph for the poor souls most devoted to him asking some special help to build a Church. Two days later, meeting at Vonsi the Rev. F. Ponblard, minister of the section of Tchan-chen, he said to me :

“ I have just received from the Rev. Father Superior a letter enclosing funds to build a church in honor of St. Angela in the name of the pupils of the Ursulines of Quebec. Yesterday you were praying to St. Joseph, and telling me how urgent it was to build. To day our dear Lord sends you the money you require ”

A few weeks later the work was in progress, the ground levelled, the materials purchased, and workmen engaged.

The next letter announced that the poor Christians no longer assisted at Mass in open boats surrounding that of the missionary, but in their own little church, the wonder of their pagan neighbors.

Since the building of St. Angela's church a regular correspondence has been kept up with Tsi-zé-ié, on the Imperial Canal in China. Sometimes the good missionary has a parcel to send. Opened in Quebec it is found to contain most interesting curiosities : Chinese embroidery, scapulars, collars, tablets of curious raised work, pictures, etc. Sometimes the church needs repairs, and of course, there is always a little amount that can be remitted from Quebec.

At other times the letter is simply a page of the history of the mission, the difficulties to be met, the vexations exercised by the pagan Chinese, ever adverse to the progress of Christianity among their countrymen. These letters are carefully preserved, they may form at some future day the annals of St. Angela's church in China.

At all times they may serve to encourage the members of the Holy Childhood to emulate the zeal of their predecessors, by whose generosity this noble work was accomplished.

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## CHAPTER VII

1846

### SODALITY OF THE CHILDREN OF MARY

The Sodality of the Children of Mary is too well known to the generality of our readers to require an explanation. To others who might suppose that it is simply a "Ribbon Society," a distinction without merit, we would remark that in our convent schools, and in Catholic parlance, a sodality has a higher signification.

Besides the spiritual advantages which are attached to these associations, such as special instructions and aids to piety, a pupil is not admitted as a member without such efforts in the performance of daily duties, as are of vast importance in the formation of character. Children of Mary are then the *élite* of the senior department of the institute. Their insignia, a medal and a blue ribbon, is a mark of the victories they have won; it is an ennobling title, and "*noblesse oblige.*"

This sodality, first introduced here, in 1843, had been made known to us by the Ursulines of St. Mary's, Waterford (Ireland), who, with indefatigable kindness, after giving us ample information relative to its object and organization, copied out the rule for us, and finally procured us from Rome a Diploma of Affiliation<sup>1</sup>.

From that day forward, the sodality among the pupils of the convent, has not ceased to produce abundant and excellent fruit. The desire to be numbered among its members exercises a salutary influence upon the pupils both as regards good order and their advancement in their studies. Among the Children of Mary are chosen, not only the president of the sodality, but also the president of the Holy Childhood and of the Literary Society of St. Ursula. Is there question of working for the poor? the Children of Mary are the first to offer their contributions and their services. In the course of the scholastic year, other calls upon their charity may be expected: they will never meet with indifference on the part of the Children of Mary. From the ranks of the sodality are most often chosen the candidates for the religious state; now for the instruction of youth, now for the care of the sick and infirm, sometimes also for the contemplative orders. It is the Master's voice! They must obey.

Nor is the membership of a Child of Mary confined to the period of her school days. On leaving the convent her certificate and medal are a passport every where to the sodality now so widely established. If her home is in the city, she continues to come to the convent for a weekly

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1—This diploma dated Nov. 17th, 1845, constitutes an affiliation with the *Prima Primaria* of Rome, approved by Pope Gregory XIII, 1584, by Sextus V., Benedict XIV, and Leo XII, 1824.

assembly devoted to sewing for the poor under the direction of one of the nuns. There she has the advantage of hearing a pious exhortation or instruction given by the local director, the chaplain of the convent. There also, breathing the atmosphere of peace which comes to her laden with her early associations, she feels strengthened against the worldly influences that may surround her.

Space will not permit us to pursue the subject further, nor introduce our readers into the interior chapel of Our Lady, where the youthful Virgin smiles upon her votaries from the lovely white altar they have erected in her honor. Neither can we depict the processions on the great festivals of Our Lady in the course of the year, when the Children of Mary, in flowing white veils, follow the glittering banner of their mother, reminding us of that virgin choir above, "following the LAMB whithersoever He goeth." Their gala day above all others is at the close of Mary's month, when all nature, in unison with the joy of their youthful hearts, displays her charms, her clear blue sky and soft temperature, her birds and her flowers, as the whole population of *Notre-Dame de Grace, St. Augustine and St. Ursula*<sup>1</sup>, issue from their respective departments, and assemble before the statue of the Madonna presiding over the play-grounds, and whose niche becomes a sanctuary on that occasion. The sacred chant of the Litany is intoned. To its undulating measures, the procession begins its march, appearing first near the cross on the highest ground within the cloistered enclosure and following, group after group, each with its distinctive

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1—Names by which are designated the different buildings occupied by the different divisions, the senior or first division of the boarders, the juniors and the Normal School.



banner, the winding alleys, till like a living wreath of beauty, it embraces the whole extent of the nuns' garden.

The last cluster in that wreath rivets our attention. It is St. Angela, personated by a Child of Mary, surrounded by little ones like so many angels. The holy Patroness of the Ursulines carries a glowing diadem of fragrant flowers, the pure lily of the valley, the sweet violet, the blue hyacinth and other flowers of spring, which she will lay at the feet of the statue of the Virgin Mother, when all have entered the chapel.

The ceremony closes amid waves of melody mingled with hymns of praise, rendered more impressive by the splendor of artistic decorations around Mary's throne, the flickering light of tapers, and the clouds of sweet incense rising there, when all assembled kneel to offer the floral crown to their heavenly Queen and ask her blessing.

How lovely is the spectacle of youthful piety! The term angelic " seems perfectly appropriate when applied to a pious young girl, a member of the sodality; for Mary is the model held up to her imitation, Mary the Immaculate, the gentle, the unassuming, the kind, the compassionate! Mary, the modest young maiden who was troubled at words of praise, although uttered by an angel, who shrank from the highest honor Heaven could bestow until assured that it was consistent with the choice she had made of virginity.

O CHILDREN OF MARY! cherish the precious title which is yours and let it ever accompany your name. Love your sodality, and hesitate not to sacrifice at times your ease or your pleasure, in order to attend its assemblies, to take part in its good works, and to show yourselves worthy of it, by your fidelity to your duties whatever may be the station in life assigned to you by divine Providence.

## FIFTIETH YEAR OF THE SODALITY

A quiet family-gathering was all that marked the day, yet how impressive the scene just witnessed within the two great halls of Notre Dame de Grace, thrown into one for the occasion! There were assembled all the inmates of the monastery, the eighty-five nuns with their two hundred and fifty pupils, in memory of the fiftieth anniversary of the first solemn reception of the Children of Mary on the same festival of the Immaculate Conception in 1846.

How sweet the singing of the Virgin's hymn of thanksgiving, the Magnificat, entoned by our good Chaplain at the foot of the new statue which he had blessed from the ritual. How touching the act of consecration renewed in the name of all present! The sodality to-day has seen its Golden Jubilee!

## FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, 1896.

The number of names among the boarders and half-boarders inscribed upon the list at the various receptions that have marked these fifty years now amounts to five hundred and fifty. Let us foretell, if we may venture to prophesy, that in 1906, at the sixtieth anniversary of the foundation of the Sodality of the Children of Mary within the Ursuline Convent, the long foreseen event will bring to each member the satisfaction of receiving a complete list of all the associates, with their after fate or state in life, as far as it may be ascertained.

## CHAPTER VIII

## ANOTHER MARY OF THE INCARNATION

(CECILIA O'CONWAY)

The fourth to bear in the community the revered name of the venerable foundress was Miss Cecilia O'Conway, whose history is within our own times and can be written in part from our own recollections.

Born in Pittsburg, Penn. 1788, of highly respectable parents, the vicissitudes of her chequered life commenced with her earliest years. They were a family inheritance.

Her father, Mathias Ignatius O'Conway, a native of Galway, Ireland, had seen the family estates confiscated under the penal laws, and while yet a stripling, was a wanderer on the shores of America. In 1787 he married the only child of wealthy Irish parents, Miss Maria Archer, whose conversion to Catholicity entailed upon her also the loss of the property to which she was the rightful heiress. The babe Cecilia was but six months old, when Mr. O'Conway with his young wife traversed the wilds which then separated Pittsburg from New Orleans, seeking a home among Catholics, and hoping to obtain an honorable subsistence, by teaching English in that French and Spanish city, while he diligently pursued his own studies in the foreign languages there spoken.

The position of official interpreter which he obtained later led to a sojourn with his family in Baltimore, in Cuba, and finally in Philadelphia. From her earliest years, our little Cecilia spoke three languages, but chiefly Spanish, which she ever preferred. In Cuba her favorite walks led to the church, her favorite visits were to a convent of

cloistered nuns. All her inclinations tended to piety. She was admitted to her first Communion at the age of eleven in Philadelphia, and confirmed there three years later by Rev. Dr. Carroll, first Bishop of Baltimore. Meanwhile her education was not neglected. Her father, highly gifted, learned and deeply religious, had constituted himself her teacher, and took pleasure in cultivating the remarkable talents of this eldest daughter whose tastes and aptitudes were like his own. These studies were chiefly religion and church history, literature, profane history, natural history and the languages.

Of her vocation to the religious state we have heard her speak, and we know that the aspirations of the young girl of sixteen were only to a closer union with Him whose "laws she had observed from her earliest years." Hence, when that generous widow lady, Mother Seton, opened a school in Baltimore with the avowed intention of changing it later to a convent, Cecilia O'Conway readily accepted the invitation to join her.

Before the close of that year 1808, the new Sisters had adopted the religious habit and removed to Emmitsburg. Gradually, as the institution began to take a definite form with the title of Sisters of Charity, Cecilia experienced such a disappointment as had nearly decided her to return to her family. Her heart was set upon a cloistered life, and from having read the Life and Letters of Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation, she had hoped that the little society would adopt the rule of the Ursulines.

Mother Seton knew of these secret aspirations of Sister Cecilia, but regarded them as temptations. The directors of the new society were still more opposed to a step which, through the influence of example, might disturb the stability of other members. In the mean time, a few Sisters were sent

to New York to make a foundation with Sister Cecilia as their Superior; but every change in the institution only served to augment her difficulties. "A private religious company," she wrote later, "without the sanction of holy Church, so mixed up with the world and secular duties, was to me insupportable."

Still she labored as bravely and cheerfully during the first fourteen years of the establishment of the Sisters of Charity, as if her whole heart had been in the work. But in 1821, the sainted foundress having been called to her reward, the same attraction for the cloister ever persisting, the way seemed opened, and Sister Cecilia made a formal demand for her withdrawal, which after much consideration was accepted.

Having obtained the approbation of the archbishop of New York, she wrote to the Superior of the Ursulines, Mother St. Henry, stating in the fullest manner the peculiarities of her delayed vocation. Letters exchanged between Bishop Plessis, Bishop Hughes and Mother St. Henry resulted in the candidate's admission to the novitiate, and some weeks later, Miss O'Conway, who had been transferred to Philadelphia before her final separation from the Society, appeared within the cloistered precincts of the Monastery, which she had so long sighed to make her home.

Henceforward, the desires of her heart were satisfied, and all her letters from the cloister breathe of peace and contentment. With retirement from the world, she still enjoyed the opportunity of doing good by the instruction of youth, preparing young souls for their duties, as well as for the true happiness of life, by the truly Christian education to which the Ursuline Order is devoted.

Mother St. Henry soon perceived that the novice, who with the veil and habit of an Ursuline, had received the honored name of Sister Mary of the Incarnation, was

thoroughly prepared for the institute. Appreciating the varied accomplishments of the new sister, she soon confided to her the direction of the first class in the boarders' department. Here, besides the study of the English language and composition, certain hours were devoted weekly to ancient and modern history, to the elements of astronomy with the use of the globes. Botany, and the other branches of natural history had their turn in the course of the year, and these especially, the teacher who had studied in various climates and countries under the tuition of her scholarly father, rendered so interesting that her pupils looked upon her class as the most pleasant of the day, while they regarded her as a living encyclopedia.

Her influence over the young girls confided to her charge tended above all to form them to become fervent Catholics and useful members of society, teaching them, by examples drawn from her own experience and observation, the importance of fidelity to duty even in the minutest points, the necessity of habits of industry, of self-control, of correspondence to grace and of living in the constant view of eternity. These salutary principles were not inculcated in the form of a dry exhortation, but they broke in naturally like a gleam of sunlight between the rifts of the clouds, making an impression the more vivid and durable from being the spontaneous effusion of deep conviction.

The different festivals of the Church afforded opportunities which our indefatigable teacher faithfully grasped, to impress the great truths of religion upon the minds of her pupils. Christmas especially had its touching representation, in all the vivid realism of the Spanish taste.

Not only the principal personages, the Virgin and Child, St. Joseph and the shepherds, or the three Kings would appear in wax figures nearly life-size, but around and beyond the

grotto, the trees, the flocks of sheep grazing on the distant hills, with Bethlehem near by. Here, at evening, groups of children would come in to sing the sweet Christmas hymns, the diligent Mother profiting of the moment to rehearse the story, ever new, of the birth of the Saviour. In Holy Week it was an illustration of a different character. Pictures of Jerusalem and the Holy Places, engravings of the Stations, the sorrowful Virgin, Our Lady of Pity veiled and standing near the large crucifix, while we pupils sadly chanted the verses of the *Stabat Mater*.

On these occasions how impressive were the looks, the accent, the voice, the words dictated by the holy faith of one who seemed to behold the invisible !

At other times, and often, we were entertained by the reminiscences of our beloved teacher's younger days. Now it was of her walks with her dear papa and mamma on the seashore in Cuba, where she would gather pretty shells like those in our collection. Or she would tell us of the church of the Angel, all in rock and shell-work, where they buried—as they do in Cuba—her sweet little sister Dolores. We knew Mother Seton, good Father Babade, Mr. Dubourg-David, bishops Bruté and Carroll, as if we had lived with them. The names of her brothers and sisters, all were familiar, especially to us who aided her in the various metamorphoses which her little class-room underwent as the months rolled on. Here she set up her Crib or her Calvary; here also she taught embroidery as well as the sciences; and here, when a holiday gave us a vacant hour, she would invite the select few who were so disposed to take lessons in the pure Castilian Spanish she loved so well. Thanks to her disinterested zeal for our improvement and to her innate love of learning, the class of young ladies formed under her teaching were prepared for the more extensive programme which was

being introduced from 1834 to 1836, under the direction of an eminent director of the Quebec Seminary. Sister Mary of the Incarnation assisted at the lessons and experiments in physics and chemistry, with the pupils of her class, as well as the novices who had been her pupils. And when years came and went, bringing in their train feebleness and infirmity, our earnest teacher could rejoice to see her work ably carried on by pupils she had formed and directed, and who were now members of the community.

The last of her class-labors was in the line of embroidery and ornamental needle-work, of which specimens are still admired.

The trials inevitably attached to longevity, failing health and strength, the loss of relatives and dear friends, the changing scenes around, which constantly remind the aged of the change which awaits themselves, were not wanting as finishing gems in our beloved Sister's crown. The acute sensibilities of a heart like hers needed the balance it possessed of a virile faith and a boundless love of God. Thus armed for the combat, the prospect of her approaching end did not alarm her. There was no definite malady, but rather a general decline, the result of age and infirmity which after a few months brought her to the verge of the tomb. With the full use of her strong faculties, with that deep and tender piety which had ever distinguished her, she prepared for the last rites of our holy religion. In the late evening hours of the 8th of March, with a last absolution from her confessor and a few watchers by her side, the feeble chord of life silently gave way. The glorious day of eternity had dawned upon the trembling soul in presence of Him she had faithfully loved and served.

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord ; for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."



## CHAPTER IX

## THE MISSES MARY AND ABIGAIL BARBER

IN RELIGION SISTERS ST. BENEDICT AND ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

With the names of the Misses Barber we are introduced to a family history which reads more like fiction than real life. The ancestors of the Barber family were living in Connecticut before the period of the Revolutionary War.

Early in the present century, Rev. Virgil Horace Barber, an Episcopalian minister, had married Miss Jerusha Booth, a lady of high intelligence, and had become the father of five children. One day, after reading the life of St. Francis Xavier, brought into his house by a Catholic servant-girl, he was led to inquire into the teachings of a Church which "could produce such godliness and inspire such heroism."

The result of his long and anxious researches, which were shared by his wife, was their embracing the Catholic faith with their little family, their subsequent separation through the conviction that Mr. Barber was called to the priesthood<sup>1</sup>, the decision of Mrs. Barber to consecrate herself to God in the convent of the Visitation, Georgetown, D. C. while he, after the absence of a few months in Rome, entered, in the same city, the novitiate of the Jesuit Fathers.

Three years later, Mrs. Barber, now Sister St. Augustine, pronounced her vows as a nun in the chapel of the convent.

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1—With Mr. Barber's change of religion, came necessarily a change of prospects. The Academy in Utica N. Y. of which he was the President, had to be abandoned, as well as his little farm with its pleasant parsonage and an assured comfortable living. Moreover, Mr. Barber had chosen the clerical state believing himself called

Mr. Barber, the Jesuit novice, at the same mass, pronounced his, as a member of the Society of Jesus. The children, four little girls and a boy, were present at this solemn consecration of their parents to the service of God, an example which in later years they all followed.

A few years, not uneventful, have passed: the three little girls in the convent of Georgetown with their mother are now respectively thirteen, fifteen and sixteen. The two eldest, Mary and Abigail, have made their choice of a state of life: they will be Ursulines. But there must be a double sacrifice: they will go to different convents.

When this is made known to Rev. Virgil H. Barber, he comes to Georgetown from his distant missionary labors in Maine. The newly consecrated Bishop of Boston, Rt. Rev. B. Fenwick, has also come to bless the family whom he had received into the Church six years previous. There is an affectionate gathering and a tearful parting in the parlor of the Visitation Convent. It is their last meeting. The strong minded mother bids adieu to her eldest daughters and they depart by stage-coach, under the protection of a worthy lady. One of the two sisters remains in Boston; the other proceeds thence to Quebec.

Mary the eldest daughter has chosen the convent near Boston as her home, but strange vicissitudes will bring her

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to the care of souls. This divine voice he still heard calling him now to the priesthood, and willingly would he follow it were it not for his wife and children.

Mrs. Barber became aware of his perplexity, and although the thought of separation from her husband filled her with agony, she felt she must make the sacrifice to God. It was done, though at the expense of untold mental suffering on both sides. Later, when asked by one of her daughters how she had been able to give up her children, she answered: "I did not do it. God did it for me. He took me up and carried me through it."

one day to accept with thanksgiving, the hospitable shelter of the monastery of Quebec, where she will end her days <sup>1</sup>.

At the age of sixteen, Mary was already as mature in judgment, as accomplished and well informed as might be expected of a young lady at twenty.

The convent of Mount Benedict, near Boston, was a recent foundation, enjoying a high reputation as an educational establishment. Here Mary Barber, now Sister Mary Benedict, pronounced her vows in 1828. Six years later, calumnious reports, ignorantly credited, and wickedly propagated, led to the destruction of this beautiful convent by an infuriated and incendiary mob. The ten nuns composing the community, with their fifty boarders, were driven from their peaceful home, and the heights of Mount Benedict, lately crowned by a fair structure, the home of piety and learning, presented only the dismal scene of a total ruin. On hearing of the terrible disaster, a pressing invitation had been sent to our dear sister Ursulines to come to us.

After an unsuccessful attempt to obtain redress and aid to restore their convent, the long journey by carriage was under-

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1—Two years later, the two young sisters, Susan and Josephine, left Georgetown, the one for Three Rivers, as a pupil, the other for the Ursuline Convent in Boston, where Mary the eldest was shortly after professed. Josephine returned to Georgetown, and in 1833 accompanied a foundation of the Visitation to Kaskaskia, where she made profession and lived to celebrate her Golden Jubilee. Susan made profession at the Ursulines of Three Rivers, in 1833, under the name of Sister Mary Joseph. She died in 1837. Samuel, after two years at the Jesuit novitiate in Maryland, was sent to Rome where he was ordained priest, and returned to his native home in 1840. After a holy life, he died in 1864, in the 50th year of his age. He had filled with ability the offices of vice-president and professor of Georgetown college, president of Gonzaga college (Washington). The last of the family disappeared with the Visitation nun Josephine Barber, who died at St. Louis, Mo. 1888.

taken under the guidance of Father Maguire who was returning from Rome. The nuns reached Quebec on the Feast of all Saints (1834).

Further efforts were made for the restoration of the convent during the following years, and it was not until six years had elapsed that, in 1840, the little community finally consented to disband, resigning themselves to the mysterious will of divine Providence. Two choir sisters, Mary Benedict Barber and Mary John Harrison, with a lay-sister, obtained permission to remain in the Monastery of Quebec.

In the mean time, Sister Mary Benedict had taken her place in our class-rooms in 1835, as teacher of English literature and composition, giving lessons at other hours on the harp or the piano.

Thoroughly educated and accomplished, as well as fully imbued with the spirit of the religious state, her influence over the pupils was most salutary. The few ladies now living, who had the advantage of being under her tuition, must still remember her as one of the most distinguished among that staff of qualified teachers who labored in the institution from 1835 to 1847.

Not only among the pupils, but also among the novices, were the superior acquirements of Sister Mary Benedict turned to good account, especially by lessons in English literature and in elocution. Her penmanship, which was a free and graceful running-hand, may be said to have imparted a character to the writing of the nuns as well as of the pupils of that period.

But her too brief and most useful career was destined to receive the sanctifying touch of suffering, patiently endured, and this for nearly a whole year. It was during the summer and autumn of 1847 that an acute spinal affection began the

slow undermining of her health, till all her energy no longer sufficed to bear her to the class-room nor even to the dearer chapel.

It was a touching sight to behold that patient victim on her couch of suffering, where her wonted grace and gentleness of demeanor seemed to triumph over pain, even as the malady itself was triumphing over the energies of life and the skill of medical assistance.

With angelic piety our dear Sister had received the last rites of the holy Church; still she lingered peacefully, awaiting the coming of the Bridegroom till His call was heard on the 9th of May, whilst the community, her own Sister among them, surrounded in prayer the bedside of the dying one. She has heard the signal; she raises her emaciated hand to form the sacred sign of the cross, then bowing her head she calmly expires, recalling to our mind by her attitude and by the sweet expression of her placid features, the death-sigh of our Blessed Lord when He exclaimed: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Miss Abigail Barber had commenced her novitiate at the same time and pronounced her vows in the Old Monastery (1828), on the same day that her sister Mary had performed that great act of the religious life in the convent of Mount Benedict. Our Ursuline, known as Sister St. Francis Xavier, was destined to fill a long career, even to the seventieth year of her life and fifty-second of her profession.

Gifted, as were all the members of the family, carefully educated, and nurtured in piety from her infancy, our good Sister possessed all the requirements of an Ursuline as a teacher of young girls. Yet was her usefulness, through excessive diffidence in her own abilities, necessarily confined to the elementary classes, where however, her success was most

satisfactory. In whatever office she was employed, order, neatness and despatch were paramount. The duties of that office were a sacred trust for which she would be strictly accountable to God. In this conviction, every moment of time was precious, every point of the rule strictly observed. Whatever labor was committed to her was performed with perfection. "Do what you do with all your might," seemed to be her motto. To this day her embroideries and fine sewing, her pen-printing and embellishing are models of their kind. The piety of her childhood was never lost; its fragrance perfumed her whole life. Confidence in the Blessed Virgin was especially a source of comfort and strength to her on every occasion. Hovering around the altar to which she would bear the first tender blossoms in spring and the freshest flowers in summer, she loved to represent herself as "Mary's lamb," a title which suggested her complete reliance on her heavenly Mother.

Although our good Sister St. Francis Xavier lived to an advanced age, her health was never robust. In the sufferings and infirmities to which she was subject, she was fortified and consoled by letters from her admirable mother, who would urge her to bear her illness "not through custom or necessity, but because our Lord is pleased to send the suffering, often recollecting that He stands behind the lattice, looking on and counting the degrees of glory He is to obtain from each act of meekness and resignation".

A severe stroke of paralysis in 1879 left our dear Sister helpless and for a time unconscious. Recovering partially the use of her faculties, it was consoling to us and especially to herself that she was able to receive holy Communion from time to time, as well as to join in the pious aspirations suggested to her. Her death occurred on the 3rd of March,

1830. Her whole life from the age of seven had been spent in the House of the Lord; to the innocence of a child had succeeded the angelic functions of the religious life.

The third daughter of this remarkable family, Miss Susan Barber, entered the novitiate of the Ursulines of Three Rivers in December 1830. With the white veil, she took the name of Sister St. Joseph, and pronounced her vows, March 19th, 1833. Her notice written by the nuns of Three Rivers represents her as a model religious, remarkable by her fervor and generosity in the practice of all the virtues of the religious state, especially that of holy obedience. This lovely flower of the cloister was gathered by the heavenly Bridegroom, on January 24th, 1837. Sister St. Joseph was only twenty-seven years old <sup>1</sup>.

The name of Miss Elizabeth Harrison, in religion Sister Mary John, later Sister Mary Joseph, has been mentioned in connection with that of Sister Mary Benedict. The services both rendered in our institution were highly appreciated, while both found a second home in the Old Monastery where they were admitted as permanent members of the community in 1840.

Received at the age of sixteen among the Ursulines of Boston, Sister Mary Joseph was admitted to her religious

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1.—The youngest daughter, "the baby Josephine," became a Visitandine. She wrote, at request, an interesting account of the conversion of her father and mother, which under the title of "Life of Mrs. Jerusha Barber," has been published among the Catholic Memoirs compiled by Rt. Rev. L. de Goezbriand, in 1885.

Sister Mary Josephine lived to celebrate the 50th anniversary of her religious profession, and died in the Visitation Convent of St. Louis, Mo., 1888.

profession in 1824. On her arrival in Quebec ten years later, she was an experienced and thoroughly qualified teacher of music, both vocal and instrumental, including theory and composition, with the whole range of instruments usually taught in institutions for young ladies. Sacred music was to her a link between her soul and God. In her thoughts of heaven, it was the celestial orchestra, the golden harps of the angelic choirs, the thrilling chords of instruments unknown to mortal ear, that awakened in her heart a corresponding thrill of the love of Him to whom her whole being was consecrated.

Her own admittance to that heavenly home was preceded by no long suffering or apprehension. A few hours of warning on the eve of the great Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, during which the last sacraments were administered, followed by a day of unconsciousness, and all was over. She had been called to the eternal feast for the possession of which she had so often and so ardently sighed.

Sister St. Joseph Harrison was in her sixtieth year, and the thirty-second of her religious profession, at her decease, June 30th, 1866<sup>1</sup>.

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1—The prospect of restoring their convent had kept the little community together until 1840. At that date the ecclesiastical superiors decided that three communities of Ursulines, those of Quebec, of Three Rivers and of New Orleans, would "share the spoils."

The two eldest professed and a lay-sister remained in Quebec, the two following in rank went to Three Rivers, while two choir-sisters and another lay sister were gladly received by the Ursulines of New Orleans. In each of the convents, these good Sisters rendered important services and gave great edification. Sister St. Augustine O'Keefe governed the community of her adoption several years. All have now gone.



## CHAPTER X

1849

## FROM QUEBEC TO GALVESTON

As cloistered nuns never travel merely for the sake of a change of place, there must have been some serious religious motive for the journey announced in the above heading, which was undertaken by Sisters Jeanne de Chantal and St. Thomas in 1849.

Two years previous to this date, Bishop Odin, lately appointed to the new diocese of Galveston, had obtained from the Ursulines of New Orleans a few Sisters to found a convent of their order in the Island City. As in the beginning of nearly all similar institutions, the little community had to struggle with many difficulties. "The harvest promised to be abundant, but the laborers were few," and already the worthy bishop had authorized the Superior, Mother St. Arsene, to apply to the Ursulines of Quebec for aid to accomplish the foundation of the new convent.

Letters had been exchanged without obtaining the desired result when, in August, 1849, the zealous missionary bishop appeared at the parlor-grating to plead before the Mother Superior and her council, the cause of the little community of Galveston. The eloquence of the worthy prelate must have been very persuasive to have obtained the services of two sisters from the Monastery of Quebec. The deeply religious heart of Mother St. Gabriel could not refuse the sacrifice, when it was urged that it would promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

The measure having been duly discussed and sanctioned, it remained to make choice of the Sisters for the important

undertaking. Sister Ste. Jeanne de Chantal and Sister St. Thomas, both highly educated and well qualified in many ways, were nominated. After consulting God in prayer, they generously accepted the mission as a favorable opportunity to signalize their zeal for the glory of their Divine Master.

The preparations for the departure need not be described, nor the emotions excited by an event so unusual in the Old Monastery. Friends and former pupils were loud in their expostulations. "How could the dear Mothers endure the fatigues of such a journey, and such a change of climate? How could they go among strangers, to labor with them and give them their confidence and affection?"

But our Sisters remained firm in their purpose and quietly prepared for their departure. At three o'clock p. m., on the 4th of October, after a reiterated embrace and many a heart-felt "*au revoir*", the tearful farewells had been said and our dear Sisters, now in their secular travelling dresses, issued from the cloister to meet our venerated Father Maguire, who had volunteered, as on a former occasion, to be the conductor of the missionary Ursulines as far as New York.

Friendly greetings awaited them at the conventual door, whence a covered carriage soon conveyed them to the quay, near which lay the steamer destined to bear them far from their convent home.

The cordial and sisterly reception tendered them in Montreal by the good Sisters of the Congregation, many of whom were personal friends of the Ursulines; the glad welcome received at the Hotel-Dieu, at the convents of the Grey Nuns and of the Good Shepherd during the three days the travelling company tarried in that city; all was duly appreciated, and recorded with many expressions of gratitude and affection in the letters addressed to the community by our Ursuline Sisters.

At the present day a journey across the United States to New Orleans would be accomplished in a few days by a continuous line of cars; but far different was the undertaking fifty years ago. To our younger readers it will be a novel experience to follow the missionary colony as they slowly proceed, now by the cars, now by steamboat, without being spared the experiment of a twenty-four hours' journey by stage-coach.

From Montreal to St. John's the conveyance was by the cars, exchanged there for the steamer *United States* which they designate as a "floating palace." Then the cars again from Whitehall to Troy; thence by steamboat, a varied journey through the unrivalled scenery along the Hudson through the State of New York, in the company of Father Maguire and several Oblate Fathers, *en route* also for Texas; such is the itinerary of the three days' journey from Montreal to New York. Mother de Chantal, when traversing the same region some twenty years previous, little foresaw this return to her native land and to the home of her childhood, for it is at her brother's house in Northmore street that the travellers are invited on arriving in the great metropolis.

Bishop Odin welcomed the missionary sisters with the affection of a father, but he would be detained in the city a fortnight longer to transact the business which had brought him hither from his distant diocese. In the mean time, the nuns are not left in solitude. Father Maguire is their most intelligent and attentive *cicerone*, and often are they invited from the palatial residence of Mr. White, in Northmore street, now to visit the Ladies of the Sacred Heart at Manhattanville, now to the college of the Jesuits in Fordham. Another day they call on the Bishop of New York, Dr. O'Connor; or they perform their devotions in the church of the Trans-

figuration, they assist at Vespers in the French church, where they hear singing that brings tears to their eyes, reminding them of their convent home. Father Bernard O'Reilly is joyful at meeting his Ursuline friends and praises their undertaking.

Nowhere perhaps was their visit more welcome than in Morissania, at the house of Mr. Harrison, brother of our good Sister St. Joseph. "There, says Mother St. Thomas, we received real American hospitality." Oftenest they are at Sister de Chantal's home in Northmore street, where the bishop comes to cheer them, and where they discover that Father Maguire is "the most genial of conversationalists," so effectually did the good Father exert himself to dispel their homesickness.

At last, Bishop Odin and his company were ready to pursue their journey. Our Sisters bid a sad adieu to their dear aged Father Maguire<sup>1</sup>, rightly apprehending that he had given them his blessing for the last time.

Our readers will remember that in 1849, the longer lines of the railroad-network which now covers the United-States were not laid; therefore it may prove interesting to follow our missionary band as they proceed westward, so moderately that it will be the 15th of November when they reach the Crescent city. On the 25th of October, they traversed Jersey City and took the cars for Philadelphia,

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1.—The grief of our Sisters at the thought of bidding Father Maguire a final adieu won them the favor of possessing his portrait a daguerreotype, the only style of photograph then known. On their return to Quebec, this portrait, supplemented by the vivid mental picture our artist Mr. Theophile Hamel had retained of his venerable friend, enabled him to gratify the community by producing an excellent likeness, an oil painting, life-size, doubly esteemed by all who were personally acquainted both with the painter and the original.

their company consisting of seven persons : the Bishop, three Oblate Fathers, and Mr. White, Mother de Chantal's brother. They could not but admire the city laid out by William Penn, its princely residences of white marble, its spacious avenues, its broad streets bordered with trees, its lovely parks and picturesque environs, where the crystal waters of the Schuylkill reflect the features of an unrivalled landscape.

In Philadelphia they were joined by three other travellers, a Mrs. Malone with her daughter, and another young lady, a postulant for the convent in Galveston. They reach Baltimore by the cars, and have only time to see the cathedral with its white marble altars and rare paintings, when they are again en route through pleasant country scenes, diversified by the elegant residences of the wealthy.

Leaving Harper's Ferry at noon they have reached Cumberland on the Potomac, the terminus of the railroad, 180 miles from Baltimore, at six o'clock p. m. They are now at the foot of the Alleghanies ; the sun is sinking behind the beautiful forest-crested heights of these mountain ridges through which they must pass. There is time only for a hasty supper in preparation for the night's travelling. Around the hotel are ranged eight or ten vehicles to which are harnessed horses whose neighing and prancing tell of their impatience to begin the journey. Our missionary band of ten persons is quite sufficient to fill one of the coaches, and now they strike off into the solitude of the mountain-road, refreshed by the cool invigorating forest-breeze, and highly interested by the novelty of this moonlight scene, whose beauties they would doubtless have enjoyed still more in the full light of noonday. There is no sleeping in a stage-coach, but the night is enlivened by many pleasant anecdotes related by the good bishop, who has seen the Alps, the monks of Mount St. Bernard, and has met with many amus-

ing adventures. Morning finds them still in the grand old forest. A bishop and a priest are there, yet no mass can be said, and the only music heard is the sound of the rolling cavalcade and the occasional shouts of the drivers. The descent to Union Town at six o'clock allowed them to halt and take breakfast; then again they pursue their way, till at Brownsville they exchange their carriage for a small steamer on the Monongahela, which in due time lands them at Pittsburg.

The large and opulent city which has succeeded to Fort Duquesne and the habitations of the Indians is soon left behind, and their next halt is at Cincinnati, where the Bishop is constrained to remain with the Oblate Fathers, one of them being too ill to continue the journey. The nuns proceed under the protection of Mr. White to Louisville. Happy are they to rest a while at Galt House, to hear Mass at the cathedral, to be graciously welcomed by Bishop Spalding, and to receive words of encouragement and a special blessing on their future labors from the venerable Bishop Flaget, whose saintly career is now near its close. Cordially welcomed by the Sisters of Nazareth, founded by Bishop David of saintly memory, they also visit and accept the hospitality of the nuns of the Good Shepherd, a community of sixteen nuns, governed by Sister Serena, a Scotch lady, whose assistant is a cousin of the noted Father Matthew.

Only on the 6th of November were our travellers on board the steamer *Glencoe*, which carried, besides the usual passenger-freight, a heavy cargo of live-stock destined for the market at New Orleans. They are rejoined by the bishop and the Oblate Fathers two days later, and continue their way. Sunday, November 11th, finds them still on board. No mass, of course, but the bishop at the request of the captain of the boat, conducts Divine service at noon, reading in surplice and

stole the beautiful prayers from the ritual, and preaching a sermon "which makes so profound an impression that he is requested to preach again in the evening." After sailing four days upon the bosom of the majestic Mississippi, noticing "the vast forests of Arkansas, the orange groves of Louisiana, the fields of cotton and sugar-cane, the charming habitations of the planters and the little huts of the negroes," every where something new to remind them of the vast distance which separates them from the shores of the St. Lawrence, they pass Baton Rouge, and halt at Lafayette on the 15th of November<sup>1</sup>.

Here the captain lands his live stock, the boat undergoes a thorough irrigation, the passengers attend to the duties of their toilet with unwonted care, for they are nearing the great city which lies there spread out on its low plain, as if to bask itself more completely in the burning rays of an almost tropical sun.

On landing, the whole missionary band proceed to the bishop's palace, a vast edifice which had formerly been the convent of the Ursulines. Soon our Sisters were on the way to the stately new convent, delightfully situated at some three miles distance from the city. There they were welcomed as old friends by Mother Ste. Seraphine and her community, among whom were three Sisters well known and well beloved, the Sisters St. Charles from Quebec, the Sisters St. Augustine and St. Clare, formerly of Boston, but also from Quebec, as our readers may remember.

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1.—Our travellers remark that any other boat but the *Glencoe* would have taken but five days for the voyage from Louisville to New Orleans in 1849. In 1816 it required forty-six days. The Mississippi in those days was the river of accidents. Our Sisters learned that in 1842, sixty-eight steamboats had perished; two years previous to their voyage, thirty-six.

After a most agreeable sojourn of twelve days with these amiable Sisters, our missionary band proceed five hundred miles further to Galveston.

The newly founded convent was but an ordinary dwelling-house with few accommodations either for the nuns or the pupils. Our Sisters were warmly welcomed by Mothers St. Arsene, St. Stanislaus, and the rest of the little colony, and soon had their offices assigned them. To Mother de Chantal was confided the formation of the seven novices; to Mother St. Thomas, the direction of the classes as mistress-general. The climate was not equally favorable to the Canadian Sisters. To Mother de Chantal, who had always suffered from the rigors of a Canadian winter, the heat moderated by the sea-breezes seemed to impart new life and vigor while Mother St. Thomas experienced its debilitating effects to such a degree, that all her natural energy was insufficient to enable her to continue her labors beyond the period of seven years.

At the first intimation of her desire to rejoin her community on account of her failing health, our Superior, Mother St. Andrew, wrote as follows:

My beloved sister,

I received your communication of the 18th November and hasten to answer it. My dear Sister St. Thomas, you are welcomed home by all your mothers and sisters, who will press you most affectionately to their heart. I spoke to our worthy Bishop on the subject; he promised me to write himself to Bishop Odin.

Write to me immediately, and let me know at what time you will be able to leave, that I may take the steps necessary to forward you the funds to defray your expenses.

Your departure will be a blow to poor little Mère de Chantal, but she must resign herself since your health compels you to abandon your post. Give my best love to the dear little Mère and the community, remaining.

My beloved sister,  
your ever devoted,

SISTER ST. ANDREW.



On her return voyage Sister St. Thomas was fortunate to have the companionship of a Texan lady, who was on her way by the same steamship from the Gulf to the city of New York. For the rest of the journey, a protector had been provided for her in the person of Mr. Hamel, a respectable citizen of Quebec, whose business as a merchant had taken him to New York very opportunely. She reached home on May 14th, and met, as Mother St. Andrew had promised her, with a hearty welcome from all her Sisters.

Mother Ste. Jeanne de Chantal, in the mean time, had been appointed Superior, and before her return to the Old Monastery in 1868, had aided in founding a convent in San Antonio de Bexar, an enchanting spot noted for the salubrity of its atmosphere, its gardens of roses and its general healthfulness. But Mother de Chantal was now on the verge of her three score years; she felt their weight, and longed for the peaceful retreat where she had commenced her religious life. It is one of the prudent and maternal provisions of our rules, that a member of the community has always a right to return to the house where she has made profession, and most cordially was our dear Mother invited home. Escorted by her loving brother, Mr. Louis White, she traversed the continent in a few, days and with far less fatigue than in 1849, to meet with the warmest welcome from the community.

Our readers will notice in the biographical sketch of this esteemed mother, that she was still enabled to accomplish the duties of important offices confided to her here, till her last malady opened to her the gates of the heavenly City in 1885, seventeen years after her return to her first convent home.

## CHAPTER XI

1854 - 1889

REV. GEORGE L. LEMOINE, CHAPLAIN

In the successor of our venerated and regretted chaplain, Very Rev. Thomas Maguire, we were blessed with another true friend and father, whose inappreciable qualities and eminent services during the next thirty years would challenge the lasting gratitude of the community.

Rev. George Louis Lemoine, on whom the sacred office of the priesthood had been conferred in Quebec, March 16th, 1839, had exercised the functions of his sacred ministry during fifteen years, in different parishes or in the scattered Catholic settlements along the Laurentides. These humble duties of parish priest or missionary were not of a nature to make him feel competent to replace so eminent an ecclesiastic as the Vicar General, Very Rev. Thomas Maguire. The position was accepted however with simplicity, in that spirit of faith and submission to the Divine Will for which our future chaplain was so remarkable.

Entering upon the duties of his office, he won pupils as well as teachers by the suavity of his manners, by his kindness and the fatherly interest he manifested on every occasion in all that related to their welfare. The duties of his charge were his only concern; his diligence and application in their accomplishment could not be surpassed.

Weekly instructions, suited to the cloistered congregation gathered in the convent chapel on Sunday mornings, conferences to the nuns, to the novices and to the Children of Mary at stated periods, weekly instructions in catechism to the pupils, and their spiritual direction from preparation for

first Communion to the end of their studies—not to enumerate the other labors and duties essential to the priestly office and the charge of souls—such was the rule of life marked out to himself by our indefatigable chaplain, and strictly adhered to during the long period of his fruitful and duly appreciated ministration. A soul to direct, to console, to absolve, was to our good Father the most sacred and dearest employ; every act that tended to promote the spiritual good of his flock was a privilege not to be easily relinquished. The lively faith, the piety with which he celebrated the Holy Mysteries, was capable of inspiring fervor and devotion to all who assisted at his daily mass.

As a director of souls, Father Lemoine was gentle and sympathetic, yet firm and deliberate; slow in counsel and prudent above all, both in speech and action, while the deep sincerity of his charity was such that each individual soul felt safer in his hands than in her own.

The devotions peculiar to the Order were lovingly cultivated by our good chaplain. The legend of Saint Ursula and her companions, rendered palpable during the middle ages by confraternities in the great institutions of learning; the prophetic zeal of Saint Angela, inspiring her at that critical period of the sixteenth century to found an order devoted to the instruction of youth; the heroic courage of our Venerable Mother, of Madame de la Peltrie and their companions, foundresses of this monastery; these were themes on which he delighted to expatiate, deriving therefrom salutary teachings and precious encouragements for the souls committed to his charge.

The hermit-life which a chaplain of the Ursulines is expected to live had seemed to him at first an intolerable solitude and constraint; but in the accomplishment of its

duties, imposed upon him by divine Providence, it became a source of peace and consolation. His silent room was as the gate of heaven; the convent was his little world, his own *sweet home*

"Beloved o'er all the world beside."

It would be superfluous to say that in the improvements which from year to year have been introduced, adding to the dimensions of the Monastery or its salubrity and conveniences, our worthy chaplain ever concurred with hearty good will. Often was it at his suggestion that they were undertaken. This was the case particularly in varying the means of amusement and out-door exercise in the play-grounds of Notre Dame de Grace. The Russian snow-hill which now rises as if by magic as soon as the month of December has deposited its yearly tribute upon the frozen ground; the long arcades where our young pedestrians can enjoy a walk, sheltered from summer's suns and winter's storms, both owed their origin to the thoughtful advice of our good father. Year after year would bring new proofs of his anxiety to multiply the innocent enjoyments of the hours of recreation, thereby contributing to the great interests of hilarity, health and contentment.

The different sodalities, introduced to promote piety and form the character of the pupils, were at all times fostered and encouraged by the zealous Director of the Children of Mary, whose office and special joy it was to proclaim the fortunate candidates and invest them with the insignia of their respective Associations.

The pupils of those years, as well as their elders admitted during the month of August for the exercises of the spiritual retreat, have not forgotten how pressingly the Director of St.

Angela's Arch-confraternity would invite them to recur to the protection of the Virgin of Brescia, to take her as their model in the practice of piety, the faithful discharge of the duties of their state, and especially in zeal for the salvation of souls.

Other pleasing recollections will be awakened in the minds of former pupils by the mention of quarterly or final examinations, at which our good Father was wont to preside, attended by the Superior and Mothers of the community. They have not forgotten the benevolent smile which encouraged the timid or the beginner, the look of interest which awaited the solving of a problem, the success of an experiment, or the recitation of a poem listened to as attentively as if it had been new and not perhaps heard then for the hundredth time.

In their literary essays especially the pupils were encouraged by written appreciations, brief, but always delicate and judicious. Their manuscripts, under the title of the "Literary Butterfly," or "Echoes from the Cloister," took the form of a monthly periodical, which paid its regular visits to the chaplain's room from 1855 to the celebration of our good Father's Silver Jubilee, in 1879.

Nor were the pupils forgotten when far from their *Alma Mater*. How beaming with pleasure was the countenance of their former spiritual Father, whenever they would call upon him or greet him at their homes! How delighted he was to hear of their welfare, how grieved when they were overtaken by sorrow or misfortune! It was chiefly in these circumstances that they were cheered by letters which they highly valued and carefully preserved. The monthly Mass offered for their intentions, the sweet hymn to St. Angela, still remind the inmates of the Monastery, to pray for the dear absent ones,

exposed to the dangers of the world, battling amid the shoals and breakers of the rough sea of life.

But our generous friend found an opportunity to prove that the sacred precincts of the Monastery were dearer to him than his own life, which he voluntarily exposed for their preservation. The occasion was briefly as follows.

At a late hour in the evening of the 20th of May, 1864, a fire broke out on Parlor street, and in spite of the best efforts of the fire-brigade, the two dwelling-houses opposite the church were consumed. A dense crowd of spectators witnessed the scene with the utmost alarm, in view of the danger to the convent and the city.

While the firemen were striving to arrest the progress of the conflagration, Father Lemoine's attentive eye suddenly discovered a kindling mass along the eaves of the church-roof, which was lined since many a year with swallows' nests. Rushing to the nearest engine, and finding his appeal unheeded, he seizes the hose, and there, with the flames of the burning houses upon him, he directs a stream of water upon the glowing coals which very shortly would have inflamed the interior, setting fire to the church and endangering the whole establishment. But at what a cost had this feat been achieved ! He was removed from his perilous position, happily before it was too late ; but his face and hands were found to be so badly injured, that only after six weeks' seclusion in his room under careful treatment, was he enabled to offer again the holy sacrifice at that altar which, but for his heroic daring, might have been buried under the ruins of the sacred edifice. The gratitude of the nuns need not be told, nor their lasting appreciation of the generous deed.

Father Lemoine had filled the office of chaplain for several years, when he was invited to review the manuscript history

of the Monastery, upon which one of the sisterhood had bestowed much patient labor and research. The work met at once his hearty approval, but diffident of his own judgment he requested leave to call upon his good friend, Rev. Antoine Racine, to read with him the long and captivating pages, which revealed to them the secrets of by-gone years in the old Monastery founded by Venerable Mother of the Incarnation. Thus passed many a long evening watch, after the fatigue of the usual occupations of the day. When the work was ready for the press, the labor of aiding in the correction of the proof-sheets was not less patiently pursued, till in print the work formed the four large volumes known as the *Histoire des Ursulines de Québec*.

From year to year our good chaplain's patronal feast of Saint George was celebrated throughout the cloister with the zest usually displayed on such occasions. Festal offerings, tokens of gratitude and esteem, addresses in prose and verse, everything was appreciated and responded to with true delicacy and refinement.

The yearly recurrence of St. George's day, April 23rd, could not fail to be the occasion of a special fête in honor of the good Father chaplain. After a few years, the programme in all the details of music, recitations, although varying etc., seemed to have settled itself in an invariable groove as far as regarded the complimentary address and the song: one of these must be in French, the other in English; "such was the rule."

This fête in Father Lemoine's estimation was the pupils' own fête, their special right and privilege. In this view, how great was his own enjoyment on such occasions! It was in proportion to his love for the dear children, and that was vast and unfeigned.

In 1877, our good chaplain's feast was celebrated by a little poetical dialogue—a pastoral it might be called, perhaps—which seemed to have a special charm for the dear aged Father. He was then past sixty years of age, and had been with us nearly a quarter of a century,

A group of little half-boarders dressed in white, and wearing bright wreaths of flowers, open the scene by advancing to surround the good Father, while they sing :

Haste to offer sweetest flowers ;  
Haste with hearts all light and gay  
Grateful thoughts and wishes blending  
On our Father's festal day

1st Maiden (*spoken*)

'The paschal time's here, but I know 'tis in vain.  
To search all the fields for a flower.  
Cold April out-stretched on the frost mantled plain  
Has no thought to adorn her a bower.  
The snow-drifts lie cheerless where flower beds should rise,  
Nor a bud nor a green leaf is seen,  
Yet this is the day when, beneath other skies,  
All the flowers hasten out with their queen.

(*Sung*) Haste to offer, etc.

2nd Maiden.

But why should we pine for the sweet fading things  
That endure but three months of the year ?  
The happy occasion St. George's day brings,  
Calls for emblems more lasting and dear.  
Ah, I know where the summer hides all the year round,  
Lovely flowers shed a perfume so sweet ;  
Their light stems spring up from the rich loamy ground,  
And they climb till their bright clusters meet.

(*Sung*) Haste to offer, etc.



## 3rd Maiden.

Give the flowers from the green-house, the bay-window, come  
 In your worth and your loveliness rare ;  
 Not a day in the year but I find you in bloom ;  
 Sweet emblems ! our feelings declare.  
 In our hearts have been nurtured such flowers, and each day  
 Is their perfume ascending to heaven.  
 Be it yours, lovely blossoms, our thoughts to convey,  
 Not to words is such high office given.

*(Sung)* Haste to offer etc.

## 4th Maiden

Let the breath of the rose fill the air with perfume ;  
 'Tis the language of sweet gratitude.  
 Bring the violets for memory ; give all the flowers room,  
 As with feeling, they all were endued.  
 The lily shall point to the pure sky above,  
 The daisy its bright hues display.  
 As we children surrounding our Father with love,  
 Sing : " Long life to our friend ! Many happy returns  
 Of the great St. George's day.

Another group of little ones with flowers sing, each in turn :

I've a rose from my own window,  
 Where I've watched it day by day  
 Now I have the same to offer,  
 That's the reason I'm so gay.  
 In our hearts are sweeter roses,  
 If we love what's right and good ;  
 They grow well by teachings holy,  
 Ah ! to whom the gratitude ?

Haste to offer, etc.

## 2nd little maiden.

I have lilies white and blooming,  
 Jasmine brighter than a star ;  
 I shall place them on the altar,  
 Where they may be seen afar.

When our Father sees them glowing,  
He will think of souls so pure ;  
He will know our prayers are rising  
With his own the more secure.

Haste to offer, etc.

3rd little maiden.

I have mignonnette so lovely,  
And the precious immortelle ;  
I have pinks and lovely pansies,  
All the flowers we love so well.  
Hear them sing: Live long and happy  
Worthy Pastor, dearest friend !  
Deign to smile upon your children,  
As our voices sweetly blend.

The whole school sing :

Through long years preserve him,  
Heaven ! from every ill.  
Send him health to labor  
For thy vineyard still.  
Where his hand has planted  
In the fertile soil.  
Ah ! may fruit abundant  
Recompense his toil.

Dear and honored Father,  
'Tis St. George's prayer  
More than ours will bring thee  
Gifts and blessings rare.  
Like him, thou in glory  
Shalt all happy dwell.  
Ah ! may we surround thee,  
Sharing heaven as well.

The 25th anniversary of our good Father's installation as Chaplain of the Ursulines (1879) offered an opportunity of which we gladly availed ourselves for a more ample demonstration.

For the first time in the annals of the monastery, it is recorded that a chaplain has attained the measure of a Silver Jubilee in the office of spiritual director of the community. The circumstance afforded an occasion to honor the much esteemed and revered Father, of which the whole population of the cloister would joyfully avail itself. A gathering of clerical friends in the chaplain's apartments, a banquet befitting the occasion, after which the company would be admitted to the reception-hall to assist at the entertainment given by the pupils, such was the programme for the celebration of the third of October, 1879.

Some thirty priests were able to respond to the invitation, and fully enjoyed the convivial hour, during which the hum of pleasant voices and frequent peals of laughter cheered all the environs of that usually quiet corner of the monastery. In preparation for the entertainment in the reception-hall, Mother St. Mary had ingeniously brought out the history of our former chaplains, each of whom was briefly characterized in prose or verse, the whole agreeably diversified by music and singing, and ending by a delicate eulogium of the hero of the day. The theme was appropriately responded to by the Vicar-General of Three Rivers, Very Rev. O. Caron who, among other things suited to the occasion, declared he had once enjoyed the company of Father Lemoine eight days "to love and cherish him during forty years." Our genial friend, Mgr Cazeau, was as usual most happy in addressing the pupils, and they, equally satisfied with their success in carrying out the parts assigned them.

But the day was not yet over. Father Lemoine's room, at eight o'clock P. M., was filled with the same company, invited to behold the novel spectacle of an illumination within the cloister and—*fire-works!*





A CORNER OF THE BOARDERS' PLAY-GROUNDS, 1870.

This part of the programme was to be executed by the pupils of the Normal School. The illumination shone forth from the many windows of the buildings that enclose the interior court-yard, fronting the chaplain's apartments. The pyrotechnic display consisted of rockets, Roman candles, etc., the crowning piece being the ascension of balloons, as large as feminine hands could undertake to manage. The *finale* of the evening entertainment was the singing of the *Benedicamus Domino* by the three hundred voices there assembled, followed at once by the *grand silence*, which at that hour is accustomed to reign supreme in the cloister.

That celebration of the Silver Jubilee is still remembered by those who were witnesses of its rejoicings or who took part in its proceedings. We shall not here attempt to tell of other days, remembered also, but with different emotions. Such is life !

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## CHAPTER XII

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### THE CLASS IN NATURAL PHILOSOPHY AT AN EXAMINATION, 1874.

It has been mentioned already that of late years the examination of the pupils, which formerly took place before a large audience, was now conducted on another plan. These examinations are mostly in writing. A part of the programme however, is carried out in presence of the Chaplain, the Superior, and some of the community. Of the proceedings on these occasions, it would be superfluous to render any further account ; but on looking over some old papers we

have met with "AN HOUR AT AN EXAMINATION" in rhyme, which will introduce the reader as an invisible witness of the scene. The ranks of the pupils were as follows:

Augusta Cooke,	Susan Foy,
Claude Stephens,	Eugénie Carrier,
Kate Coote,	Hildah Andrews,
Mamie Sheehy,	Valérie Rivard,
Rosie Jellett,	Emma Tessier,
Emmeline Stephens,	Julia McEnry,
Josie MacCarthy,	Mary Jane Cannon,
Carrie Lloyd,	Charlotte Peters,
Marie Lachance,	Amelia Aylwin,
Grace McDonald,	Emélie Lemoine,
Mary Adams,	Alphonsine Matte.
Marie Huot,	

'Twas one o'clock. We class-mates, ready stood  
Resolved to make the Examination good.  
Just in our midst, there was a grand display  
Of apparatus,—'twas no children's play.

Already our companions seated round  
Waited our tottering wisdom to confound.  
But, lo! our Reverend Father now appears!  
And nuns! an audience to excite our fears.

Still, nothing daunted, first rose *Alphonsine*,  
Explaining what the learned physicians mean  
By *matter, body, atom*; and of course,  
Experimenting duly to enforce  
These mighty truths.

—Now 'tis *Emélie's* turn;  
And, from her brief discourse, we all may learn  
That *matter* is *inert*. Moving or still,  
It cannot change its course, like us, at will.  
This we must note, nor from the flying car  
Sudden attempt to leap, lest borne afar  
By motion we've acquired, prone on the ground  
Our lifeless, mangled limbs *inert* be found.

But now *Amelia*, with examples clear,  
Tells how *cohesion*, bringing *atoms* near,  
Makes *solid*, *liquid* *aëriform*, to be  
The *states of bodies*.—From this force set free,  
Repellent forces make the atoms spread ;  
One *grain of musk* will floods of odor shed,  
One thread of gossamer, she dares maintain,  
Six thousand little fibres doth contain.

*Charlotte* takes up the theme: "Now I pretend,  
That nothing God has made can ever end  
By human means. If heated by *the flame*  
Of lighted lamp, *water* will change its name ;  
Gone from our sight, in *vapor's* viewless form  
To night 'twill fall again, in *dew* or storm.  
No atom yet is lost, since first was spoke  
That word creative which the world awoke."

Who will dispute the point? Not *Mary Jane*,  
Nor *Julia* either, seeking to explain  
*Attraction's laws*, both when it binds the spheres,  
Or guides the drop that trickles down in tears ;  
Or when, through *tiny pores* our lamp it feeds,  
Acting against itself to serve our needs ;  
Now bids, in measured stroke, the *pendulum* swing,  
To mark how minutes fly on rapid wing.

But hasten we, for *Carrie* waiting stands  
To show what *force* becomes, in skilful hands :  
The *lever* on its *fulcrum* softly moves,  
And thus man's power is multiplied, she proves.  
The *wheel* and *axle*, the obedient *screw*,  
The *six mechanic powers* pass in review.  
*Carrie* has made us wise ; and when next year,  
The wintry scenes around us bright and clear,  
We, speeding down the snow-hill, loud shall cry  
"It is the *plane inclined* that makes us fly."



*Gracie* and *Mary* pass to other themes,  
And purest water bright before us gleams.  
The bending *siphon* lifts the yielding tide—  
Don't say who hastened then to *Gracie's* side—  
While *Mary*, placid, gravely weighs with care  
The mimic crown, in *water* and in *air*;

"*Archimedes* himself, she says, thus sought  
To know whether the king was wronged in aught."

Again the theme is changed: of *air* they speak  
And all its wondrous *properties* they seek.  
"'Tis *heavy*, 'tis *elastic*, 'twill expand;  
*Compressed* beyond a limit 'twill withstand.  
It presses on us like a sea of lead,  
Full *fifteen pounds* on every *inch* that 's spread."  
All this experiments most clearly proved,  
While *fountains* gushed, and ponderous weights were moved.

'Twas *Marie*, *Josie*, *Rose* and *Emeline*,  
With *Céculie* and *Emma*, six, in fine,  
Who all these curious *properties* discussed,  
Drawing conclusions, all approved as just.  
*Mamie* one point forgotten called to mind  
And showed how *falling bodies* sometimes find  
Their speed retarded. First, with skill and care,  
From a *long tube*, she has *expelled the air*.  
A *guinea* and a *feather* downward tend,  
With the *same force*, and side by side, descend,  
Proving, triumphant, that 'tis *air* alone  
Prevents a feather *falling* like a stone.

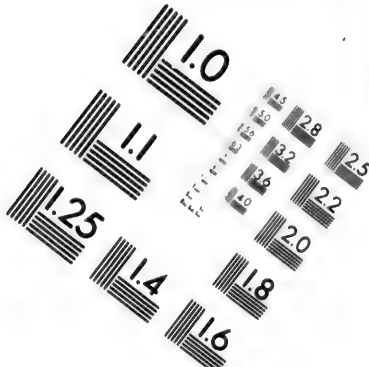
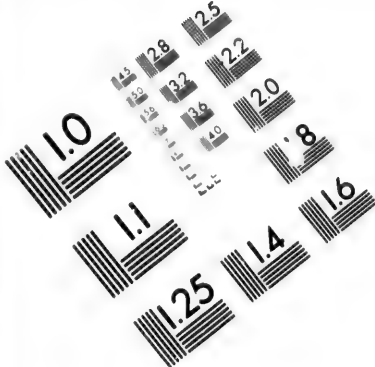
Once more the subject changes. 'Tis for *Kate*  
To tell how through the *air waves undulate*,  
Beating with nicest finger, every note  
That issues mellow, from a tuneful throat,  
Recounting, thro' the ear-drum, to our mind,  
The thousands secrets which were else confined.  
Oh, *sound*! what power to soothe! what charms untold  
When thy full waves, harmonious, are unrolled!  
What stores of wisdom, else in thought concealed,  
At thy command, instantaneous, stand revealed!

But nature's brightest page is wanting still.  
'Tis yours, *Valérie*, to unfold with skill,  
The theory of *light*; to tell the laws  
Given to the sunbeam, by the great *First Cause*.  
"Bright messenger! Like thought, it leaps o'er space.  
Lifting the gloom that veils fair Nature's face.  
Its three-fold beam, now spreading into *seven*,  
Now blending all in one pure ray of heaven.  
Glossed on the bosom of the falling shower,  
It paints the rainbow, as it paints the flower."

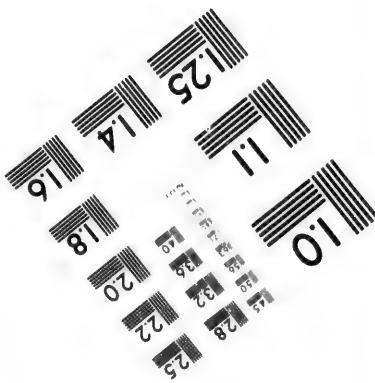
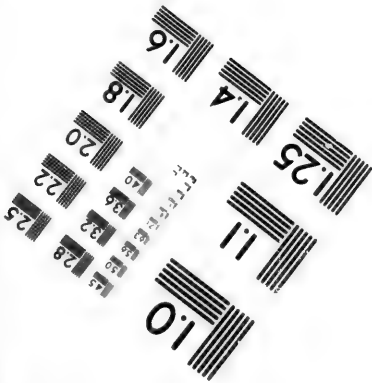
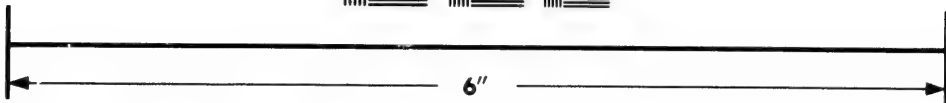
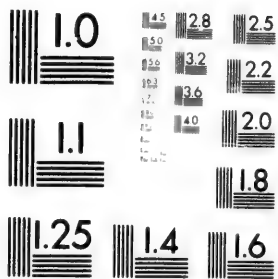
But haste we to record what *Hildah* says  
Of the *electric fluids* wondrous ways.  
"Since *Franklin*, fearless, called it from the cloud,  
We know 'tis gathered when the thunder's loud.  
*Two fluids*—so 'tis said—must be combined,  
Or restless are they, as the changing wind.  
*A fiery spark* betrays the eager leap;—  
Join hands, and you shall know its rapid sweep.

'Tis not more strange, says *Claude*, than what we tell  
Of the *magnetic fluids*. Mark me well.  
This lifeless *needle* ever knows the *North*;  
The trusting mariner with it goes forth  
O'er unknown seas, all safe as on the shore.  
But wherefore should I now detain you more?  
Strange sympathies philosophers have found  
Among the *fluids* which this earth surround."

*Eugénie*, *Susan* and *Augusta* rise:  
Attention, listeners, fix your wondering eyes.  
*Electro-magnetism*, that is the word,  
With apparatus that will proof afford.  
*Galvani's* name and *Volta's* first appear;  
But science has advanced from year to year.  
The *magnet* and the *electric fluid* serve,  
As feeble man directs, nor dare to swerve.  
To bear the humblest *message* swift they fly,  
Or strike the *alarm-bell*, when flames run high.  
But not content with *telegraphic* skill,  
*Susan* shows how physicans at their will  
Send the *electric current* thro' our veins.



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Seeking to calm the worst rheumatic pains,  
Our young philosophers would prove their lore,  
And, if their auditors, willing before  
To be amused, would only now be cured !  
No suffering ever more to be endured ;  
Oh, what a triumph !—" Reverend Father, try !  
And you, companions !"—" How our pulses fly !"  
The bravest, not reluctant, seize the wires,  
And through the whole *commotion* no attention tires.

All have enjoyed the hour throughout the hall ;  
Thanks to the Reverend Father ! Thanks to all !

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## CHAPTER XIII

1860 - 1879

### ROYAL VISITORS

#### THE MARQUIS OF LORNE AND PRINCESS LOUISE

Sixty years ago—1837—the Convent annalist recorded an event which was already the talk of the city and of the world. It was the accession of the daughter of the Duke of Kent, the youthful Victoria, to the throne of Great Britain. She has noted the oath of allegiance taken at the Château St. Louis by the Governor and the officers, civil and military, the proclamation read by the sheriff and received with shouts of joy by the troops and the people, while the voice of the cannon and repeated discharges of artillery, announced the glad event to be published throughout this great section of the young Queen's vast empire.

To-day—1897—we rejoice to inscribe the celebration of the 60th anniversary of that coronation, the glorious and

longest reign in that long line of ancestry, since William the Conqueror asserted at the point of the sword his right to the crown of England.

Reminded by the circumstance, we scan the other pages of the annals for a record of the visits with which the Ursuline Convent has been honored by the different members of the royal family. More than a century ago—it was in 1787—Prince William Henry, at the age of twenty-two, visited Canada, and then for the first time the Convent welcomed a scion of the House of Brunswick, who appeared “most affable and gracious *although a sailor*.” Four years later—1791—prince Edward, Duke of Kent, our present gracious Queen’s father, was in the country, and having requested to be allowed to witness the ceremony of a nun’s profession, our Mothers assigned him, with the curé of Quebec and the officers of his suite, a place of honor within the interior chapel.

After Mass, Bishop Briand, who had officiated at the altar, accompanied the prince and his suite through the cloistered part of the monastery. At the Superior’s room the company were treated to refreshments to which they did honor, and observing that some fancy articles in bark-work were for sale, the Prince made a purchase for which, an hour later, he sent payment far exceeding the value.

The other princes of the royal family who have since visited Canada have not failed to avail themselves of the prerogatives of their rank, to cross the threshold of that privileged sanctuary from which ordinary visitors are rigidly excluded.

In 1860, the Queen’s eldest son, Edward Albert, Prince of Wales, visited Canada. A brilliant public reception by the

Governor and all the civil and military authorities of the city were tendered the heir apparent to the throne of England.

A few days later, a no less loyal demonstration was offered to the young Prince by the pupils of the Ursulines, in the name of all the inmates of the monastery. On this occasion His Royal Highness, attended by the Duke of Newcastle, his preceptor, by the Governor General Sir Edmund Head, the Bishops of Quebec, Montreal and Kingston, with other dignitaries of Church and state, besides gentleman and ladies to the number of about one hundred and fifty, was received at the conventual door by the Superior, Mother St. Gabriel, and the nuns, the introductions being made by the Vicar General Father Cazeau, the indefatigable *cicerone* at that time on all similar occasions in Quebec.

The preparations for this unique reception, the elaborate decorations of the hall and the throne, the choice of the music, the address, the presentation of bouquets of flowers, everything had been attended to with a zeal proportionate to the occasion.

The Prince, who had remained standing while Miss Loretta Stuart, the Hon. Judge Stuart's daughter, delivered the address, responded by reading in a clear voice an appropriate answer, receiving the paper from his preceptor.

The visit of the monastery, in its different departments, detained the company a couple of hours, the Prince manifesting as much interest in observing the plain apartments, the bare floors, the simply furnished cells of the nuns, as one of us might have felt in visiting the apartments of Windsor castle.

In 1869, due honors were tendered to Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, who visited the establishment, and ten years

later in 1879, to Princess Louise whose consort, the Marquis of Lorne, had been appointed Governor General of the Dominion of Canada.

Of this visit the *Morning Chronicle* published an account from which we select a few paragraphs.

"Soon after their arrival at the Citadel yesterday, June 6th, His Excellency and Her Royal Highness apparently, determined to maintain the traditional favor with which the Ursuline Convent has ever been regarded by the representatives of the Crown in Canada, both under French and British régime, lost no time in intimating their intention of visiting within its historic walls. Yesterday, then, precisely at three o'clock, the Vice-royal party drove up to the main entrance on Donacona street. His Excellency and Her Royal Highness were received at the outer gate by His Grace Archbishop Taschereau, Monsignor Cazeau, V. G., Rev. G. L. Lemoine, Chaplain of the monastery, and others.

"A cordial greeting took place and the visitors were conducted into the portico, where several distinguished citizens and ladies were presented. At the conventual door His Excellency and Her Royal Highness shook hands with Mother St. Catherine, the Lady Superior, and all were admitted within the precincts of the cloister, the nuns being placed on either side of the corridor to join the party on the way to the reception-hall.

"Entering the hall on the north end, Her Royal Highness and His Excellency were led to a raised dais, handsomely carpeted, and surmounted by a canopy of scarlet velvet, looped up with massive gold cord and tassels, and provided with chairs for their use and that of the Archbishop, a grand march being played during their entry on harps and pianos. On the southern wall was a beautiful embellished screen, bearing



in the centre the letters "V. R." and on either side "His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, 1860" and "Prince Arthur, 1869." All around was handsomely decorated in evergreens looped up with gold lace and tassels, the walls being hung with drawings and paintings, the work of the pupils during the past year. All around the hall were arranged on steps rising in amphitheatre the pupils of the institution; the boarders and half-boarders in spotless white, the young ladies of the Normal School, who occupied the highest step next the walls, were dressed in black; while the *Religieuses*, as well as the visitors, occupied the space on either side of the throne. In front, in the body of the hall, were placed the musical instruments, surrounded by the choir of youthful musicians. His Excellency, Her Royal Highness and the company being seated, the Ode of Welcome was sung, to piano, harp, harmonium and guitar accompaniment, the solos being given by Mesdemoiselles Maria Maguire and Esther Boisvert, and 'tis pleasing to have to say that both young ladies acquitted themselves in a manner highly creditable both to themselves and the venerable institution of which they are such worthy *élèves*."

## ODE OF WELCOME AND ADDRESS

Oh! welcome guests! Thrice welcome!  
Our hearts and Cloister-Home  
Exult and bound with gladness;  
The day so long invoked hath come.  
Lo! 'tis bringing, round us flinging,  
Rosy tints, like the morning's smile,  
All hail! all hail! the merry peal is ringing.  
O Princess, all hail!  
May thy star never fail!  
All hail, princely heir of Argyle!

Dulcet music stealing  
From the fount of feeling  
In the heart's recess,  
Tells with what emotion,  
Loyal, pure devotion,  
We your presence bless.

High the festive banners wave,  
Welcome the brave !  
While around merrily sings,  
Jubilant sings :  
Long life, O Rulers dear !  
All serene glow the sky  
Above your pathway clear.  
High, ye festive banners wave !  
Long may Heaven our Rulers save :  
Him of Ducal House the glory,  
Her of Race renowned in story.

Here Miss Ida Neilson advanced and delivered the following address :—

May it please Your Excellency,

Not for discourse could wait our jubilee,  
But, gushing, came the voice of melody  
For this high welcoming.

My Lord, the tide  
Of joy that rolls its bright waves o'er the wide  
And varied spread of this great Western Land  
To greet your advent, is not at a stand.  
All radiant mounts it o'er the castled height  
Of Champlain's olden city. Now, how light  
Leaps it over Cloister-walls,  
Glancing, like sunshine, thro' our studious halls ;  
Thrilling our young hearts, stirring in our veins  
The tuneful flood that flows in measured strains,  
Our timid lyre, amid its chords untried,  
Would welcome thee, O Princess ! Albion's pride.  
Welcome, O Ruler ! of ancestral name  
So high, on Caledonia's lists of fame.

Amid our people pleasant be your stay,  
E'en as to us this most auspicious day.  
Our people ! none more loyal, thro' the zone  
Of the vast Empire, stretching from the throne  
Of great Victoria to the utmost sea,  
Where floats the Red-Cross flag triumphantly.  
And none there are, than ours mid all the throngs  
Who've gathered round you, that with truer songs,  
From warmer hearts, have sought to testify  
Their admiration, for this token high  
Of royal favor. Naught too dear is there  
For her Canadian liegianscy. A fair  
And cherished Flower, our Gracious Sovereign chose  
From her own garland bright. This peerless Rose  
Entwined a noble stem from Scotia's heights ;  
Both of the Queen and Court were the delights.  
Now Canada calls *hers* these regal Flowers ;  
Joyful her people shout : " They're ours, they're ours ! "  
While over all the land the mellow joy bells ring.  
And loud, " Long live our Gracious Queen ! " glad voices sing.  
" ILLUSTRIOUS GUESTS," the honor here bestowed,  
This visit friendly to our loved abode,  
Shall be remembered e'er with deepest gratitude.  
Oh ! might the precious favor often be renewed !

## THE ODE CONTINUED.

Sweeter notes now blending  
Sing this condescending,  
Sing the noble LORNE.  
Softer strains acclaim Her,  
Lighter accents name Her  
LOUISE ! the royal-born.  
Princess ! Ruler ! Be your life  
With all heavenly blessings rife.  
Lo ! we come, jubilant come,  
And gather around.  
Joy doth abound,  
For our Guests on us smile,  
Resting the while,

Here in our own convent-home.  
 Oh ! welcome, guests ! thrice welcome !  
 Our hearts and convent-home  
 Exult and bound with gladness ;  
 The day, the joyous day hath come !  
 Welcome thrice, beloved Rulers ;  
 Oh ! rest awhile in our dear Convent-home.

The address in French was delivered by Miss Braun with equal perfection of style. Miss O'Reilly then advanced and addressed the distinguished pair in English and French, showing a perfect mastery of both languages. She referred to the visits, from time immemorial, of French and English Governors to the Monastery, and also gave a sketch of the origin and history of the Normal School branch of the institution since its foundation twenty two years ago. Then thirteen little girls dressed in white and wearing wreaths, each carrying a beautiful bouquet in her hand, advanced to the foot of the throne accompanied by two young ladies, Misses Smith and Letellier, and a dialogue began, forming an acrostic on the names of "Lorne" and "Louise", in which the various flowers were described :

THE FOLLOWING WERE THE ACROSTICS.

**L**aurier toujours brillant, symbole de victoire,  
**O**livier du Seigneur, doux emblème de paix ;  
**R**omarin précieux, loyale est ta mémoire ;  
**N**oyer puissant, splendide, ah ! présage sa gloire !  
**E**rable aimé, grandis, et rappelle à jamais  
 Son nom et ses bienfaits !

**L**ilas si beau, si frais, grâce de nos printemps ;  
**O**ranger, dont l'arôme embaume la Puissance ;  
**E**lmaire glorieuse, ah ! règne ici longtemps !  
**I**ris, céleste Iris, annonce l'espérance ;  
**T**ellaire, à la vertu tu donnes préséance ;  
**E**glantier des beaux-arts, tes attraits sont charmants !

His Excellency addressed the young ladies as follows :

" I had to-day an opportunity of seeing two systems of defence, two of the bulwarks of this country ; because this morning I rode all over the Levis fortifications upon the other side of the river, and have also examined all the defences of the Citadel, together with the officers of the staff of the Militia here ; and this afternoon I have come here and I have found another series of defences which are for home defence, and which I think are quite as strong and much more likely to be useful, or, at all events, to be put to use, than those fortifications, either over your heads at the Citadel, or on the other side of the river, because I hope we shall never have any enemy advancing upon us from the South in our time. But here you have been taught to contend against folly and ignorance—enemies that are to be found everywhere,—and I must say that I have come to the conclusion that the home lines are the strongest, for in the Reverend Sisters of the Ursuline Convent there are engineers who can be trusted to hold any lines. The Princess and I thank you very much for all the trouble you have taken in the recitations and dialogues you have given. She has been much touched and pleased that the authorities of this Convent have remembered in such a pleasing manner the visits which her brothers, the Prince of Wales and Prince Arthur paid in former years.

" They have a very pleasant recollection of the visits which they paid here, and I do not much wonder. My own experience has been such that I am not surprised that each Governor General has been always anxious to come here, and has always knocked at the door and has never been refused admittance. (Laughter). And when he does enter, what does he see ? He sees a vast, well organized establish-

ment where harmony and order seem everywhere to prevail, and where everything seems to be conducted with that quiet and simplicity without which good work cannot be done. We cannot tell what result all this love and labour bestowed upon you will bring, but I believe you will do your best, young ladies here, to build up a God-fearing and loyal nation in Canada." (Applause).

The National Anthem was then sung and the distinguished guests with their suite were invited by Mother St. Catherine the Superior, to visit the building.

The *Morning Chronicle*, after following the visitors from the boarders, department and noticing the magnificent view afforded of the Laurentides and the surrounding country, the class-rooms, bright and airy, and the other more antique parts of the monastery, concludes by seeing them through the outer or public chapel, rich in its valuable paintings, its monument to the illustrious Montcalm. Then, "turning once more toward *the world*, the viceregal party were again met by the pupils who gave them a parting salute by singing "God Save the Queen." His Excellency and Her Royal Highness and party took their departure, after taking leave of the Rev. Mother Superior and the other *Religieuses*, and expressing the satisfaction they felt in their visit. The vast numbers who had assembled to witness their arrival and had patiently awaited their exit for over an hour and a half, gave them three hearty cheers as their carriage drove off."

## CHAPTER XIV

MOTHER ST. MARY *née* ADELE CIMON

25TH SUPERIOR, 1874

To many of our readers Mother St. Mary requires no introduction; she has so recently disappeared from among us!

Born in 1830, of the worthy family that still resides in the picturesque village of Malbaie, Adèle Cimon, at the age of ten, was preparing for her First Communion among our pupils, under the careful spiritual direction of our Chaplain, Rev. Thomas Maguire.

That important act accomplished, the following years witnessed the rapid development of her rare talents, no less than her advancement in piety and in all the virtues that best adorn the youthful character. At sixteen she already aspired to the dignity of Spouse of Christ, by the choice of the hidden life of a religious; and neither the rosy dreams of her youthful imagination nor the powerful attractions of her pleasant home were sufficient to move her steadfast will to postpone the sacrifice. On the Feast of the Annunciation, 1848, the young candidate was admitted to the novitiate; in July she was clothed with the habit of the Order and obtained the beloved name of our Heavenly Queen, to be known henceforward as Sister St. Mary.

Her success as a teacher dated from her first appearance in that capacity in the class-room. The resolute dignity of her bearing, her perfect self-command, the evident pleasure with which she sought their improvement, impressed her pupils with a due regard for her authority and a high esteem for her qualifications.

From year to year our good Sister's advancement in the various branches of learning as well as in the virtues of the religious state, rendered her services ever more available and precious to her community. Her facile pen was ready for every occasion, were the subjects to be treated serious or gay, in prose or in verse, while her willingness to be of service seemed to render every thing easy to accomplish. Charged with the teaching of French Literature, and General History as well as Religious Instruction, her aim was to impress upon the youthful mind the lessons of wisdom and piety, rather than to excite excessive admiration for the exploits of war or the productions of genius.

During the several years that Mother St. Mary was directress of the senior division of boarders, her influence in forming their character laid the foundation of solid happiness for many a family throughout the Dominion of Canada and beyond. Her part in the publication of the History of the Monastery has already been noticed. Yet neither for these labors nor for the numerous services she rendered in the Institute, is her community under so many obligations as for the indefatigable zeal with which she devoted her energies to forward the Cause of the Beatification of our Venerable Mother. The cogency of argument in her long defence of the heroic virtues of the servant of God, did not escape remark before the learned members of the Commission. Great admiration for the "Theresa of Canada," and unbounded confidence in her intercession were among the earliest impressions of her infancy; the same assurance of her protection continued to nourish her piety to the latest hour of her life.

The votes of the Community in 1872 called Mother St. Mary to the administration as Superior.



It was again "the right person at the right time." Young and in perfect health, full of energy, the long deferred project of extensive repairs and building was not an enterprise to alarm her.

Plans were made out, and soon the site of a new-building of large dimensions was marked off from the north east angle of the block formed by the old buildings; a pendant to the wing added to the west angle in 1858. This new extension rears its massive walls to a height of four stories from the basement, affording a spacious novitiate, dormitories and other apartments chiefly occupied by the novices.

When this undertaking had been accomplished, the reconstruction of the old buildings along Parlor Street required the demolishing of walls more than 200 years old, in order to obtain broader foundations.

It was an animated and busy scene all summer, while the masons were at work, followed by the necessary staff of carpenters, plumbers and painters till in September the new building was in readiness for its various occupants. To the Normal School department were assigned several well-lighted apartments, dormitories. The space remaining afforded class-rooms, a new suite of parlors, and more suitable accommodations for the Chaplain's lodgings.

Other desirable repairs were undertaken in various parts of the old buildings, till the Monastery stood not only much enlarged, but in a great measure renovated.

Mother St. Mary was next appointed to the office of Mistress General of the boarders, and subsequently to that of Assistant Superior, in which employ she was destined to close, all too soon, her meritorious and useful career.

Neither the multiplicity of affairs with which our good Mother was often charged, nor the difficulties which some-

times threatened to retard their accomplishment, sufficed to depress her spirit or ruffle her serenity.

Ever accessible, and considerate for others, she bore sweetly the burden of authority, as if in preparation for the burden of the cross which awaited her at the meridian of her days. Healthy in appearance, and first at every observance imposed by the rule, no one knew that an insidious sickness was poisoning the life-spring of her existence. As in most cases of the kind, the cancerous nature of her malady was only discovered when already beyond the reach of remedy. But it could be borne for the love of Jesus and be rendered highly meritorious by resignation and patience. Thus did our beloved Mother sanctify the long hours of those three long years of gradual decay, devoting whatever remained of her strength and life to prayer and such labors as could benefit her community.

The young sisters, to whose studies she lent the light of her long experience, have not forgotten the lessons so cheerfully imparted during the decline of that devoted teacher. Nor has the Monastery ceased to admire the persistent energy which enabled the trembling hand of an invalid to aid in correcting the second edition of the first volume of the History of the Ursulines a legacy, as it were, of her love for the Venerable Mother and her community.

The day of her release dawned on the 10th of October, 1886, before she had completed her fifty-sixth year.

May her dear soul rest forever in the bosom of Him she so ardently loved, and so generously served !

## CHAPTER XV

## SUPERIORS FROM 1875 TO 1889

MOTHER ST. GEORGE AND MOTHER ST. CATHERINE

At the close of this half century, from 1839 to 1889, two Superiors, Mother St. George Van Felson, and Mother St. Catherine Tims, were alternately charged with the government of the community, as had been Mother St. Gabriel and Mother St. Andrew at its commencement.

Companions in their later school-days, sister-novices and colleagues in the offices of superior and depositary, their companionship hardly ceased with life, their death occurring at the same date, the 16th of August, the one in 1892, the other in 1894. Their graves in the lowly garden cemetery, which first received dear Mother Saint Catherine's loved remains, are only separated by a few feet of earth.

Mother St. George, known in the world as Miss Georgina Van Felson, was the youngest daughter of the late Hon. Judge Van Felson, whose handsome residence was on St. Louis Street, bordering on the convent-grounds. Georgina, as well as her three older sisters, was a pupil in our half-boarders' department from her early childhood. In the family circle, that little one, with bright expressive eyes and round rosy face, was seldom called by her baptismal name. Her womanly ways, her frequent offers of service and protection had won for her the pet name of *la mère*.

At school, her proficiency in her studies was remarkable, while in drawing and painting she excelled. At home her quiet disposition was remarked as very peculiar; the amusements usually so enticing to young people in society had no attractions for our future Ursuline. While her sisters were

receiving company, and gay music filled the halls of the paternal mansion, Georgina, at the age of seventeen, would have been found in some distant apartment, or seated on the solitary steps of the winding stairway, with her netting or embroidery in hand, or perchance, her beads and prayer-book. Thus it could not have been a surprise to the family circle, when the young girl solicited the permission of her parents to offer herself as a candidate for the life of an Ursuline in the neighboring monastery.

Meanwhile, as her father's secretary this favorite daughter had often been employed in copying the letters written in his office, or in writing under his dictation, thus forming herself to the style of business and the elegant penmanship of which later she availed herself so advantageously as circumstances required.

From the day of her profession in 1846, to that of her return to the novitiate as mistress of novices, in 1866, Mother St. George was afforded ample opportunity for the exercise of the fourth vow of an Ursuline, her attainments rendering her competent to take charge of any class that might be confided to her, while her happy talent for imparting instruction never failed to interest her pupils and captivate their attention.

We, who have labored by her side, living under the same roof from the time of her entering the convent to the day of her departure for a better home, can bear witness to her solid piety, her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and her ardor for Holy Communion, as well as to her solicitude in acquiring the virtues of a true religious. Exact in the observance of the rules of the monastery, she was not less vigilant as Superior, to prevent the decay of the primitive spirit and to promote the welfare of all who were confided to her care. Sincerely devoted to her community and

economical of her time, her skilful fingers were ever busily occupied, and often had her work-basket to be replenished with the linen fabric which she fashioned so deftly and so rapidly. When busy at her easel, often would the younger sisters gather around to admire the progress of her painting, or they would watch her palette of water colors at the social hour, when without interruption to the flow of conversation, wreaths of flowers would blossom from her magic pencil, or sacred emblems unfold upon the church vestments which it was her delight to ornament.

Even when charged with the government of the community, or occupied with the cares of providing for the house as depositary, the young artists were ever free to present their work to her esthetic taste for approbation or remark. On such occasions it was not rare that a finishing stroke, a relieving shade, or a fleecy cloud floating over the waiting landscape, would elucidate at once and enforce the suggested improvement.

At the close of her second triennial term of superiority in 1890, her enfeebled health had not permitted the community to charge her with any office, but they were happy to see that her long experience would still be made available among the councillors. In illness as in health, her habits of industry prevailed over her need of repose, and the work-basket as well as the escritoire followed her to the infirmary. She could still write with steady hand, and her last neat stitches on the nuns' linens might serve as a model of sewing as well as an example of the useful employment of every moment of time.

The gradual decline, destined to end in death, was not attended by any violent pain or suffering, but as the mid-summer passed, it became evident that the end was drawing near.

The immediate preparations were made in peace; the attenuated thread of life broke without a struggle, setting free the captive soul which only longed to be at rest henceforth, in that eternity where God is all in all.

It was the feast of the Assumption, August 16th, 1894; Mother St. George had attained the seventieth year of her age.

Around the lifeless form the sisterhood gathered in mourning, yet while they gazed on that placid countenance, transformed and beautified by the Angel of Death, they found themselves comforted by the assurance of the eternal happiness of their departed Mother.

MOTHER ST. CATHERINE, *née* ELIZA TIMS

The highly respectable family to which our future Ursuline belonged was originally from Oldcastle, county of Meath (Ireland). In 1834, they came to Canada and settled in Quebec. Eliza, the third daughter, was but seven years old when she beheld for the last time the green fields of Erin; yet even at that tender age pictures of her beloved home and its surroundings, were indelibly engraven on her young imagination, and in after years were ever recalled with pleasing emotions.

Entering the convent as half-boarder at sixteen, she was already prepared to join an advanced class and to relish the studies in the higher branches of education. Generous and warm hearted, she had also the quickness of repartee as well as of temper, which seem to be the natural inheritance of the children of the Emerald Isle. Let us relate how the latter served, at a critical moment, to turn the tide of her life, and direct her to the peaceful harbor of the religious state.

A rather severe reproof for absence from school had provoked the young girl to the rash decision to return no more to the convent. One of her teachers hearing this, and powerless to persuade her to change her mind, besought her to go to the chapel and pray a few moments, adding : " Ask Our Blessed Lord to guide you. Who knows what grace He may have in store for you." Many years later, that teacher learned how fruitful had been the word of caution and the silent visit to the Blessed Sacrament. There for the first time had arisen before the mind of the young girl, the great problem of life : " What does God demand of me ? Has He destined me to serve Him in the world or in the religious state ? "

The secret impulsions of grace were not left unheeded ; at the age of eighteen, Miss Eliza Tims had taken her place among the novices, under the gentle guidance of Mother Ste. Marie de la Ferrière, and on the 26th of November, 1844, she was clothed in the habit of the Order, under the name of Sister St. Catherine.

But her vocation was to be tested by a severe trial. In the spring of 1846, as the time of her profession drew near, her health became so impaired that the community, seriously alarmed, decided to suspend the exercises of the novitiate for the beloved novice, allowing her to return to her family, with the assurance of resuming them as soon as her recovered strength would permit.

No pains were spared by the dear relatives to render that home more than ever pleasant and attractive, and gladly would they have prolonged the reunion thus effected ; but Eliza's heart was in her convent-home ; and happy was that 24th of June, 1846, when she was enabled to rejoin her beloved companions in the novitiate. Her preparations for

holy profession were prolonged till the 24th of June, 1847, a whole year, according to our constitutions.

Few have been more affectionately and universally beloved than Mother St. Catherine; in the more immediate circle of the sisterhood where her amiable qualities were best known, there also were they best appreciated. The ready wit and acumen of the Irish character, joined to a solid judgment and rare abilities, rendered her society as delightful as her services were beneficial. At the hour of recreation her presence, like a cheering ray of sunshine, was ever welcome. With her talent for narration the most ordinary occurrence would interest the hearer as much as a more important event, and a trifling anecdote, depicted with the lights and shades of her vivid imagination, never failed to entertain agreeably.

Recalling to mind these by-gone hours, we behold again that cheerful countenance, we hear the gleeful laugh that called for answering mirth, the pleasant voice that soothed while it exhilarated; we feel the influence of that graceful charity, that religious spirit, which stamped her features and regulated all her demeanor as of one whom all might seek to resemble.

Many are the former pupils, now perhaps mothers of families or fervent religious in convents, who remember with love and gratitude dear Mother St. Catherine, their teacher or their directress. Another circle of acquaintances and friends was formed while she was engaged in the office of depositary, or that of superior, and these have not forgotten the gentle nun, as intelligent of business as she was edifying in her conversation, whom to know was to esteem and admire.



Called to govern the community during two consecutive terms, from 1878 to 1884, the important enterprise of the foundation of the Convents of Roberval on Lake St. John and of Stanstead fell to her share. The responsibility of the undertaking was fully realized, but she had recourse to prayer, and placing all her confidence in God, she felt His hand guiding her and conducting all securely.

A careful selection of the subjects who were destined to the foundation of Roberval, and a prudent attention to provide for its temporal security, have thus far ensured its prosperity and won for it the confidence of all ranks of society.

Another foundation having been demanded by the Bishop of Sherbrooke, Right Rev. A. Racine, the preliminaries had been settled and every thing provided for, except the nomination of the foundresses, before the expiration of Mother St. Catherine's second term of office (1884).

These two branch-houses were destined to enjoy the beneficial influence of our good Mother's watchful care, her counsel and her prayers, even after she had ceased to fill the office of superior. During the following six years, as depositary, she had frequent occasions of rendering them service. To crown all her benefits, in 1890, she consented to her appointment as superior of the little community of Stanstead, thus bequeathing herself to her dear missionary daughters, and giving them the most undeniable proof of her affection and devotedness.

In the space of a few months, however, it became evident that the sacrifice she had made in retiring from the mother-house had filled the measure of her merits and obligations. Her declining health required her immediate return to her community, where the most tender and assiduous care surrounded her to the close of her long and painful illness.

Her well earned crown acquired thus its brightest gems by the long and patient endurance of physical suffering.

If at all times the amiability, the ever ready flashes of Irish wit, the tender piety, the truly religious spirit of our beloved Mother St. Catherine had rendered her company edifying and delightful, the same lovely qualities exhibited in the sick chamber excited reverence and admiration.

On the 16th of August, 1892, the summons came for a speedy departure, speedy and unexpected at that precise moment, yet long foreseen and abundantly provided for by the reception of the sacraments and frequent recourse to the prayers for the dying.

Is it not a merciful dispensation when, all being ready, the parting scene is abridged?

"May her dear soul rest in peace!—and it surely does"—was the silent ejaculation of each tearful mourner as we laid her to rest, August 16th, the first to break the green sward in our newly enclosed cemetery where

"When we think of all her winning ways  
We almost wish there had been less to praise."

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## CHAPTER XVI

1882 - 1884

### CONVENTS AT ROBERVAL AND STANSTEAD

An Ursuline Convent, as described by our Rules and Constitutions, is an establishment complete in itself. It has started, perhaps, from a small beginning; but when fully equipped it is an independent institution, admirable in its

organization, truly efficient and prepared for its twofold object : the sanctification of each individual member by the exercises of the religious life, and the promotion of the welfare of society by the education of young girls according to the principles of true Christianity.

In a cloistered convent each member is assured of a permanent home with the Sisters of her choice ; a condition which to her seems essential to her content and happiness ; while there are congregations otherwise organized which seem more attractive to souls of a different cast. Thus is accomplished that beautiful "unity and variety", which is characteristic of the work of the Holy Ghost in the Catholic Church.

Founding an Ursuline Convent is not simply opening a school, or providing an academy where young girls may obtain a medal or a diploma. There must be the prospect of a house, where souls consecrated to God can carry out the provisions of their rule, and the observances of religious life, while devoting themselves to the arduous work which distinguishes their Order.

For these reasons, and from ever awaiting the manifestation of the will of God, the foundations from the Ursuline Convent of Quebec have been few. The first, that of Three Rivers, has celebrated the 200th anniversary of its existence this year, 1897. Founded by Monseigneur de St. Valier, and governed during thirty years by Superiors from the mother-house, it has its own edifying and interesting history, published within a few years past. It has also its recent foundations in the State of Maine.

Many times and from various quarters the Ursulines of Quebec had been solicited to detach a branch from the vigorous old tree planted here two hundred and fifty years ago by the Ven. Mother Mary of the Incarnation.

Our Mothers and their ecclesiastical Superiors had not found any one of the proposed foundations really opportune, or uniting all the requisite conditions to ensure its stability and success, until a recent date, when circumstances peculiar and providential seemed to manifest clearly the will of God. At the same time it was a patriotic enterprise. The fertile region around Lake St. John and some other parts of the Province being rapidly colonized, the evil of emigration, had diminished which at one time threatened to depopulate the banks of the St. Lawrence. Along the Saguenay, and especially along the fertile shores of that lake which has given its name to the whole region around it, Catholics had settled, and the population was on the increase, but destitute of institutions for religious education, beyond the common parish schools. There also was the Indian Reservation, and possibly an opportunity to benefit these ever wayward children of the forest. Was it not a repetition of the conditions which had brought the first Ursulines to New France in 1639 ?

Concurring with these inducements were other favorable circumstances : a numerous and well appointed novitiate, the prosperous state of our convent finances, the approval of ecclesiastical authorities, withheld on many other occasions, and, the unanimous consent of the community, wherein the ardor of enthusiasm was not wanting to fan the flame and draw down the blessing of God, without which no good work can properly be commenced or be continued.

The project of a railroad which would shorten the distance between Quebec and Lake St. John had long been agitated and would soon become a reality.

The new bishop of Chicoutimi, Rt. Rev. Dominique Racine, on the 18th of February, 1881, with the approbation of His Grace the Archbishop of Quebec, proffered a formal demand

for the foundation of an Ursuline convent. The project met the approval of the community; a convent should be founded. This required a journey to the Lake, to select the site of the future convent, and to decide upon the plan of its construction. That journey was then far from being the pleasant trip which the railroad has made it. The departure was fixed for the 24th of May, when Mother St. Catherine Tims, Superior, Mother St. George Vanfelson, Depositary, and Mother St. Mary Cimon, Mistress-general, issued from the cloister, accompanied by Mrs. E. Gagnon, a sister of Mother St. Mary. The early morning hour did not prevent the party from being the object of an amicable demonstration, wherein former pupils, friends and relatives vied with each other in manifesting their affection and their delight at this opportunity of presenting their kindest greetings.

We need not follow the travellers to the Lower Town where they met with an ovation which threatened to prevent them from reaching the steamboat in time to embark, nor ask what were their impressions as they sailed down the St. Lawrence, whose dark waters and pleasant borders they had seen before, but had never expected to see again. They noticed more especially the points which they had formerly visited, St. Paul's Bay, the Eboulements, so descriptive of its name, Malbaie, the native parish of one of the travellers, where loveliness and grandeur unite their attractions. Passing from the broad expanse of the St. Lawrence to the black waters of the Saguenay, and remembering that in the olden times our first Mothers halted here at Tadoussac, they continue their voyage between stern and threatening cliffs till the steamboat whistle warns them that the wharf is near. Chicoutimi, the pride of the Saguenay river, is reached in time to hear mass, in the Bishop's church, on Ascension

day. The rest of the journey, some ninety miles, must be performed by land in primitive vehicles, suited to a rough road through a wild and hilly country. Our travelers enjoyed the aspect of the growing parishes, St. Dominique, Hébertville, St. Jerome, Pointe aux Trembles, and finally reached their destination. Here arches and banners saluted their arrival with the inscriptions; "A thousand times welcome." "Blessed are ye who come in the name of the Lord".

In a few days the choice had been made of a property at Roberval and the purchase concluded. The return to Chicoutimi coinciding with the Feast of Pentecost, the nuns had the advantage of assisting again at the Pontifical mass, celebrated by Bishop Racine, who greatly rejoiced at seeing this fair commencement of the realization of his plans.

The "welcome home" at the Old Monastery was naturally most joyous.

Meanwhile, the dwelling-house purchased with the property was fitted up to serve as a temporary convent. Four of the Sisters named for the foundation repaired to Roberval to prepare for the ceremony of the installation, which was to take place in August.

Already the Superior of the new community had been named; it was Mother St. Raphaël, *née* Gagné: Mother St. Henry Dion was named assistant, Mother St. François de Paule Gosselin, depositary. The other foundresses were Sister Mary of the Nativity Létourneau, Sister St. Alexander Poitras, with two lay sisters, St. Joachim and St. Vincent.

All were on the spot in readiness for their future labors, when on the 1st of August, 1882, in presence of Mother St. Catherine and Mother St. Joseph, the ceremony of the installation took place. The sky, as it should be on such an occasion, was unflecked by a cloud; the lake spread out like

a mirror was unruffled, save where the picturesque Indian canoe rippled its glassy surface. All around the Convent and along the road leading to it, a fresh young grove of fir-trees had risen as if by magic, with banner-crested arches at various distances and mottoes telling of joy and good wishes.

At an early hour the Bishop of Chicoutimi who to-day witnessed the fulfilment of his ardent wishes, sang high Mass in the village-church surrounded by a numerous clergy, the nuns being present. The good pastor, Rev. Jos. Lizotte, to whose zeal the Convent would ever be so much indebted, read the pastoral letter approving the foundation. A sermon worthy of the occasion was delivered by Very Rev. B. Leclerc, V. G., pastor of Hébertville. After Mass, the blessing of a bell, the generous donation of a pious lady, Mrs. Wm. Murray, of Toronto, one of the benefactresses of the Convent, gave occasion for many generous hands, and among them some of the Indian race, to offer their gifts. Dinner, prepared by the ladies of Roberval, is served by them to the clergy at the Convent.

The final ceremony commenced at 3 o'clock P. M. Solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the village-church after which, in procession, the people, the nuns and the clergy proceed to the convent. When the new cloister is blessed, the prelate addresses a few touching words to the nuns who stand near him surrounded by the crowd, and invites them to take possession of their chosen habitation. Kneeling for his blessing, the Mother Superior receives the key from his hand, and joyfully followed by all the Sisters, disappears within the sacred precincts, which are henceforth a barrier between them and the outside world. From the adjoining chapel, now filled by the clergy, the bishop entones the hymn

of thanksgiving, the *Te Deum*, which is responded to with joyful hearts by the little band who feel strengthened for the labors that await them.

Meanwhile the bell already suspended aloft in the new belfry awakens the echoes along the lake shore with its first joyous vibrations.

Thus was the young colony safely started, comfortably sheltered, its wants provided for, and its future success prepared. If at a later period a terrible and unforeseen disaster is sent them by divine Providence, it will be met with firmness and resignation. The difficulties and privations which had been wanting in the beginning, will now serve to manifest the solidity of the religious formation, and assure the durability of a work, which to be lasting, must be founded upon the cross.

But let us not anticipate upon a distressing page of history. Here we narrate the events of the foundation, not those of January 6th, 1897, which have rendered a restoration necessary.

In gratitude to divine Providence, however, let it be recorded that the convent at Roberval has fully answered the expectations of all who contributed to its foundation. Its benefit to that section of Canada can hardly be over-estimated. From the beginning, its aim has been the welfare of the rising generation by a solid religious instruction, by forming them to habits of industry, thrift and economy, to usefulness and the social virtues which are the true basis of domestic happiness. In this view, the practical arts of an industrial school formed a part of their programme of teaching from the first opening of their classes.

The proximity of the Lake, which on the north forms the boundary of their cloister-grounds, affords the pupils an occasional sail upon its pellucid waters, if not for the rarer



sport of a venturesome angling for the Ouananiche. In the convent grounds already young plantations of forest trees give promise of goodly shade, and fruit-trees offer the succulent plum, cherry and apple, while tiny wild-flowers still assert their right to blossom by the side of their more brilliantly clad cultivated flowers in the convent garden.

The industrial school would require a long description. It is the pride of our legislators who have willingly endowed it and who have not been sparing in their praise of its management. Here the resident pupils of the convent-school, or others who desire to follow this practical course only, are initiated into the secrets of the kitchen, the bake-house, the laundry and dairy; here they may learn to spin and weave, to fabricate their own clothing or that of their household, to knit or sew in all the varieties which taste and leisure, as well as utility and economy, may suggest.

The growing prosperity of the community will be sufficiently indicated by the mention of a new stone edifice of large dimensions added to their temporary convent in 1885; of successive additions to their number by the reception of novices, till they were sufficiently numerous for all the offices and even for a separate novitiate (1889). The same year a regular *Bill of Incorporation*, obtained from the legislature, has authorized them to govern their temporal affairs as an independent institution.

#### URSULINE CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART, STANSTEAD

The southern borders of Canada, where they meet the Green Mountain State and New Hampshire, received their first settlements in the trying times of the American Revolution. Then, had each one to choose between the Old Flag of England, or the Stars and Stripes just unfurled in the

colonies, and not a few loyalists passed the "Lines" and "hewed out for themselves new homes in the Canadian wilderness."

All along the frontier, as Dr. Grant says, "the early Massachusetts pioneer transplanted to Canadian soil the old farm-life of New England origin nowhere more evident than at Stanstead."

The first opening in the magnificent forest which in 1796 still covered the plain where now reposes the neat village of Stanstead, was made by the sturdy axe of one of these New England farmers, in search of a new home for himself, his wife and two children.

The rustic dwelling of Johnson Taplin was ere long replaced by a more comfortable mansion, and surrounded by the clustering houses of many neighbors of the same New England origin.

To-day that elevated site in the centre of the plateau a mile square which constitutes Stanstead Plain, is occupied by a handsome Catholic church, dedicated to the Sacred Heart. Lovely villas, comfortable residences, varying in style and dimensions with the taste or means of the owners, succeed each other behind a canopy of spreading maple trees, along the principal street of this Pearl of the Eastern Townships. The population, less than formerly at the present date, is stated to be 580 souls, among whom and in the environs of the village are fifteen Catholic families.

In 1874 this section of the Province of Quebec, including the counties of Sherbrooke, Compton, Richmond, and Stanstead, was formed into a new diocese, the see being fixed at Sherbrooke. The first Bishop, Rt. Rev. Antoine Racine, soon had his seminary, under the patronage of St. Charles Borromeo, an academy for boys, and some other religious institutions. In 1883 the Bishop of Chicoutimi, Rt. Rev.

Dominique Racine had obtained the promise of an Ursuline convent for his diocese. Why should not Bishop Antoine Racine be equally successful?

The locality selected for the future foundation in the diocese of Sherbrooke, was Stanstead. There, at a distance from the convents already established, were numerous families, mostly Catholics of French origin, destitute of schools in which their children could obtain the needful instruction in the tenets and practices of their religion.

The situation of Stanstead, besides, promised a wide field of usefulness. By railway communication, pupils might reach the convent from the neighboring towns, as well as from the American cities which annually send many young girls to study in Canada. In the flourishing village of the Plains there were doubtless many thoughtful matrons who would rejoice to confide their daughters to the nuns, whose influence in forming the character of their youthful charge as well as in refining their minds and manners is well known. Beyond the frontier, in the pretty hamlets and villages along the Connecticut, and all through Vermont and New Hampshire, there are beves of young girls belonging to Catholic parents, who, without coming as far north as Quebec, would be happy to find an Ursuline convent ready to initiate them to the same course as is pursued in the mother-house.

With these considerations in view it was decided that Bishop Antoine Racine's request should be granted. A suitable tract of land, at a convenient distance from the village proper, was secured, and the handsome building destined to serve as a convent erected under the kind and able inspection of good Father Michael McAuley, who contributed generously of his own funds towards defraying the expense of the foundation.

The journeys required on such an occasion were more pleasing than those that had been undertaken in the direction of Lake St. John. At one time the route chosen enabled Mother St. Catherine and Mother St. George to pass a day in the Ursuline Convent of Three Rivers, where it would be difficult to say which were the happier, the visitors or the visited.

The Sisters named for the foundation were as follows:

Mother Dion of Ste. Eulalie, Superior;

“ McDonald of the Sacred Heart, Assistant;

“ Mary Létourneau of the Conception, Depositary.

The other members of the community were: Sisters Roy, Marie des Anges; Murray, Mary of the Purification; Coupal of Ste. Euphémie, Lindsay of St. Agatha, and two lay-Sisters, Ste. Luce and St. Roch.

The elections in August (1884) having appointed Mother St. George Superior, and Mother St. Catherine Depositary, the latter was commissioned to proceed to Stanstead with a part of the little colony, in order to complete the preparations for opening the new convent on the 18th of August.

On the eve, an illumination transformed the pretty village into a fairy land, the entire population taking part in the rejoicings.

On the following morning, it being the solemnity of the Feast of the Assumption, High Mass was celebrated in the Parish church, by the most Reverend T. Hamel, V. G. rector of Laval University. An appropriate sermon was delivered by Very Reverend A. E. Dufresne, V. G., of Sherbrooke, in presence of Right Reverend L. Z. Moreau, Bishop of St. Hyacinth, and of some twelve or fifteen clergymen from the colleges and parishes in the vicinity as well of as the nuns. After mass an imposing procession was seen winding its way

from the parish church to the new convent, while the chant of the *Magnificat* and the *Ave Maris Stella*, resounding there for the first time perchance, awoke the echoes around with Mary's song and Mary's praise. The blessing of the convent, and the solemn blessing of the people from the convent-balcony with the uplifted ostensory by the Bishop of St. Hyacinth, closed the morning ceremony of the installation.

Dinner, prepared and gracefully served by the ladies of Stanstead, refreshed the goodly company before they dispersed, leaving the nuns grateful to God for this auspicious beginning, and grateful also to all who had shown so much cordiality and good will on this occasion.

At six o'clock P. M. the keys of the conventual door are in the hands of Mother Superior; the little family are now mistresses of the situation, freed from the importunities and useless interruptions of idle visits, while ready to welcome all who on business or on other useful errands would ring the convent door-bell.

Already there was sufficient work before them in organizing a comfortable abode for themselves and their expected pupils, setting school-room furniture in place, preparing the sleeping apartments, kitchen, refectory and chapel, buying provisions, and returning thanks for the kind attention of their neighbors, who for many days kept them supplied with choice viands ready for the table without further application of the culinary art.

The school opened on the first of September with a fair number of pupils: it has continued these fifteen years to enjoy the confidence of the public, drawing away pupils, at times, from the Stanstead female college, its rival, and even some few from the mother-house in Quebec.

The convent of the Sacred Heart at Stanstead, after being under the direction of its first Superior six years has since been governed by Mother Mary of the Conception, with Mother St. Aloysius as her Assistant, and Mother Ste Eulalie as Depositary. It has increased its dimensions by a second building, while its grounds planted during the first years with trees for fruit and shade are improving yearly in loveliness as well as in usefulness. Other members have been added to their original number from the mother-house, and novices formed by themselves to the religious life have made profession.

There would be much to say of the natural features of this region, where the Green Hills of Vermont and the more distant White Mountains of New Hampshire skirt the horizon in one direction, while level plains intersected by winding streams, and rounded hills crowned with forest trees, vary the scenery in another; of the salubrity of the climate, the bracing air, ever in motion over these heights of land which separate the streams destined to bear their tribute to the distant St. Lawrence, from those that form the origin of the lovely Connecticut, flowing south to the Atlantic Ocean.

But let us remark the nearer environs of the new convent, and we shall admire the modest stateliness of this home of the Ursulines, embosomed in verdure and surmounted by its graceful spire,

Around which the swallows chirp  
And robins sing at early morn,

pointing heavenwards as if to remind us of the chief aim of our existence; the ever growing attractions around in orchard, grove, garden and avenue, all perfumed with the breath of flowers; the extensive lawn "carpeted so green and sweet",

ending only at the precipitous edge of the little rivulet, the Tomfobia, which serves as a cloister-barrier on that side. These are the principal features of this peaceful and happy retreat, where science and religion, ever advancing hand in hand, shall shed a beneficent influence over all the vicinity, and far beyond the local horizon which sets a limit to our vision, but not to our wishes for the future usefulness and prosperity of this recent foundation, the Convent of the Sacred Heart.

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## CHAPTER XVII

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### VISITS OF ENGLISH GOVERNORS TO THE URSULINES DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Our readers have already remarked that the pupils of the Convent are afforded opportunities which not unfrequently would have failed them in their own families, to approach very distinguished personages, to address them perhaps, and to listen to them discoursing untrammelled by the formalities of their official capacity. The visits of the representatives of our Gracious Sovereign especially, while they break the monotony of the school-routine, serve to awaken the attention of the pupils to the importance of many of their studies, while adding a page to history and a day to be recalled with pleasure in after years. Even the youngest of that group, selected perhaps to offer bouquets while they plead for a holiday, will be likely to associate with the pleasure they enjoyed, a name and a date which will be a land-mark on the fresh soil of memory.

Neither should the preparation for an entertainment or the occasional reception of visitors be deemed a loss of time,

when all things are properly ordained. Besides the formation of the manners of the pupils by enforcing the rules of etiquette and the usages of society, the attentive teacher will find these occasions an excellent test by which to know the disposition, the defects, or the virtues of her youthful charge, thereby to aid them in the difficult task of moulding their character.

But, returning from this digression, we may state it as a fact, that a visit to the Ursuline Convent has, from the earliest times, formed a part of the programme of Governors and other persons of high distinction when first entering the city of Champlain, the old Stadacona, now called Quebec, which for so many years was the capital of Canada.

We here recall to mind these distinguished visitors, omitting, however, in the receding vista the more distant figures, most amiable and courteous though they were. We can merely mention a Governor Bagot with Lady Bagot and their children, a Lord and Lady Elgin, so friendly in their visits or in presiding at a distribution of prizes; a Sir Edmund Head, a Lord and Lady Monck, the latter revisiting the Convent with her daughters several times, assisting on one occasion at a nun's profession, and making it a duty to come and take leave of her "Ursuline friends" on the eve of her departure for England.

The present chapter will give occasion to such of our readers as made the convent their home between the years 1868 and 1878, to revivify some pleasant pictures on memory's page by the mention of Lord and Lady Dufferin, whose first official visit they have not forgotten, nor perhaps the second, nor others, when they were accompanied by their family of lovely children.



At the last visit of the distinguished Governor the young lady appointed to speak for the community, after expressing "unfeigned regret for his departure, profound admiration for his merit and gratitude for the favor of this and former visits," added "the warmest good wishes for his safe return to his ancestral home, the ever undiminished prosperity of his future career in which", she prophetically declared, "new duties and new honors awaited to add new lustre to a name already so distinguished."

In answer His Excellency declared that he could not think of leaving Canada without spending a few moments under the venerable roof of the Ursulines, and bidding farewell to its inmates, paying many a graceful tribute to the institution, and dwelling in a manner which his own word and emphasis only would adequately render, upon "the self-sacrifice of the inmates of the cloister, and their generosity in giving up everything earthly for the training of the tender youth committed to their care."

At the moment of departure he took occasion to tell the Superior, Mother Elizabeth Tims of St. Catherine, herself a native of the Emerald Isle, that he would not have ventured to return to Ireland and have to tell his wife that he had neglected the promise he had made her a few weeks since—"that he would not leave Canada without bidding farewell to the Ursulines of Quebec." Thus closed the visit of Oct. 20th, 1878.

We have devoted a page to the official visit of the Marquis of Lorne (1879); but the Marquis preferred an informal visit, and with friends from Albion's Isle, just arrived in Quebec, more than once rang at the conventual door asking leave to show them the antiquities of the Old Monastery.

On one occasion the Governor's visit, coinciding with a religious profession, the relatives of the newly professed

being known to the viceregal party, were admitted with His Excellency and his suite as well as two American ladies, sisters of two of the nuns; and certainly of all the guests, they naturally considered themselves the most fortunate<sup>1</sup>. Nor is it forgotten in the Convent that, when in 1886 the Honorable G. Ouimet, visiting at the Exposition in London, met the Marquis and the Princess, "they spoke with interest of their friends in Canada, and sent kind messages to the Ursulines."

None of the Governors who have since been named to the high office have deviated from the programme adopted by their predecessors. Thus were received, in 1884, Lord and Lady Lansdowne, with little lady Bertie, seven years old; in 1888, Lord and Lady Stanley; in 1893, Lord Montgomery Moore and the amiable Lady Moore. Lord and Lady Aberdeen, with their interesting family, have likewise honored the Monastery by repeated friendly visits, official or informal, presiding at the distribution of prizes when the occasion has permitted, and in every way manifesting their high appreciation of the institution which Lord Dufferin had called "the eldest daughter of science in America".

If we have not been able to give a separate page to the receptions of our Lieutenant-Governors, we would at least not omit to mention their friendly readiness to make use of the prerogative of their dignity by visiting the cloister, soon after their appointment to office. Our annals are equally faithful in recording the event, which is historical as well as social. Possibly it is more familiar, as the Governor's wife is likely to be a former pupil, already well known to

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1—Mrs. William Baldwin of North Stratford, N. H. and Mrs. Seabrook of Washington, D. C.

the nuns and affectionately remembered, even as their own memory is faithfully kept in the sanctuary of her grateful heart.

How many other distinguished personages have visited the Monastery whose names, had leisure permitted, it would have been a pleasure to inscribe!

Alegates and Papal Nuncios, missionary Bishops from Hong-Kong and Vancouver, Archbishops and Bishops from all the great cities of the United States, not to speak of our own beloved Cardinal, nor the Archbishops and Bishops of the Dominion, whose presence within our little cloistered-world is ever the signal of joyful demonstrations.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

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### CHILDREN OF MARY UNDER THE BANNER OF ST. URSULA

If it is glorious to bear "the heat and burden of the day" in the service of the best of Masters by a long life of labor and merit, is it not equally a blessed privilege, an inestimable grace, to win the crown of victory and receive the blessed reward at the very onset of the combat, without incurring the risks of the field or receiving the wounds that scar the warrior of many battles.

Thus have we mused, recalling to mind those beloved ones that have passed from our midst in the freshness of their youth, the fervor of their first sacrifice, accepted for its "odor of sweetness in the presence of the Lord." Their death may have seemed premature, the prospect of their usefulness in

the community, a failure to be deplored ; but faith has other standards by which to judge, and the verdict, " Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord ", takes no account of years.

In the following notices of the Children of Mary who have become Ursulines, we shall confine ourselves to those who finished their course before the year 1884, a period of thirty-three years dating from the first entry, in 1851.

From the establishment of the Sodality in 1846 to its fiftieth year, 1896, the names of five hundred and sixty pupils, following the course of studies in our classes as boarders or half-boarders, have been inscribed on the list of Children of Mary.

This simple fact is already a certificate in favor of the young ladies thus distinguished. Of their fate in after years, of their trials or their consolations, of the good odor of their virtuous deeds, of their long life or early death, we are not always prepared to render an account ; although we are aware that a considerable number have already passed through the vicissitudes of their earthly existence, and gone forth to that unknown country where we shall all one day be gathered.

At this date, seventy-five of these Children of Mary are known to have entered the religious state, forty-two having made profession in the Old Monastery. Of these, more than half are still active laborers here, or in our two recently founded convents, some reckoning their twenty-five, thirty or more years of profession. Let us hope they may long be spared to cultivate the Vineyard of the Lord, and become as remarkable for their longevity as they are for their piety, zeal and usefulness.

The first member of the Sodality who entered our novitiate was Miss Adèle Cimon, known in religion as Mother

St. Mary. Of her life and labors we have given a sketch as one of the Superiors of the monastery. Her companion of profession, Marie Louise Proulx of Ste. Julie, is still among the laborers alluded to above.

The next Ursuline from the ranks of the Sodality was Miss Monica Plante, a niece of our beloved Mother St. Gabriel. Admitted to profession in 1853, Sister St. Stanislaus seems to have followed the example of her holy patron, by her love of the rule and her fidelity to all the duties of the religious state. Like him also, her short life was crowned by a holy and happy death.

Following the footsteps of Sister St. Stanislaus and completing her course likewise at the age of twenty-eight, we meet another sister-novice, Miss Glaphyre Gosselin of St. Gertrude, received into the Sodality in 1852, and admitted to profession as an Ursuline in 1857. Her memory is particularly dear to those who knew her best, her companions in the novitiate, or her pupils over whom she exercised the happiest influence. Five years after her profession, the bright countenance which promised health proved—as only too often is the case—the prophecy of an early death. Consumption lurked beneath these fair appearances, and Mary had led her child into the cloister, only to assure her place among the virgin train whose entrancing song is the delight of Paradise. That none but consoling thoughts are suggested by the last moments of beloved Sisters like these, may be seen by the lines we subjoin, which were written after the death of dear Sister Monica Plante of St. Stanislaus.

ON THE DEATH OF DEAR SISTER ST. STANISLAUS.

I saw her on her dying bed,  
That meek and gentle one.  
She looked on death without a fear,  
Well pleased her race was run.

She sweetly smiled, as there she leant  
Upon her Saviour's breast;  
An infant in its mother's arms  
Thus calmly takes its rest.  
How dear unto the Lord, thought I,  
Must be the heart's fresh bloom,  
Since, in reward, such blessed light  
Is shed around the tomb!  
How good it is to serve our God,  
And lay up treasures, where  
Nor moth, nor rust, will e'er corrupt,  
Nor thieves purloin our share!  
How sweet to have our hearts so pure  
That, e'en should reason stray,  
We'll talk of heaven, or with the saints,  
To whom we've loved to pray!

But while I knelt with Sisters dear  
Beside that bed of death,  
And murmurs low of prayer went up  
With her expiring breath,  
I thought of one almost as young.<sup>1</sup>  
But bound with other ties;  
Alas! around that dying couch,  
Dark clouds of sorrows rise.  
Oh! there he stood, her bosom friend,  
Bowed low as in despair;  
Around six weeping children hung,  
Imploring Heaven to spare.  
But no! Death's cruel dart was poised,  
The fearful blow must fall.  
Ah me! what grief! what utter woe!  
The victim saw it all,  
Yet nerved her heart to bid adieu  
To all this earthly love.  
Rejoice, O happy nun! that thou  
Such anguish need not prove.

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1—The writer's sister, who died a few weeks previous.

Thy sacrifice, all gladly made  
When thy young heart was rife  
With all the hopes that beckon on,  
And gild the way of life,  
Hath won for thee this peaceful hour,  
This rest from earthly care ;  
Gently thy spirit may depart  
Upon the wings of prayer.

Come hither now, ye pupils dear,  
For whom she toiled and prayed ;  
Who oft have met her cheerful smile  
Her dove-like voice obeyed.  
Come, gaze upon that lifeless form,  
Nor start with dread or fear ;  
Is not the seal of blessedness  
Upon her hallowed bier ?  
Say, is there not a holy spell  
Brooding this cloistered ground,  
As angels, with their clustering wings,  
This peaceful tomb surround ?  
And is there not, in such a scene,  
A power your hearts will own,  
A power to win you all to live,  
Like her, for God alone ?

The two next Children of Mary early lost to us were our dear Sisters St. Isabella and St. Ignatius, known in the world as Miss Ellen Allan and Anna Neville, both of the city and both educated in our classes from their early years.

Lovely in character as they were in person, none who were their companions as pupils can have forgotten their piety and good example, the charm of their conversation, the modesty of their address, their talents and application to their studies. The novitiate seemed the proper sphere for the unfolding of these lovely flowers, and the community had a right to anticipate much consolation in beholding the fruit of their holy lives and labors.

But alas! only four years after pronouncing her holy vows, Sister St. Isabella was attacked by that fell disease which never spares its victim. The winter came, and on the 7th of Feb. 1862, our sweet Sister bade adieu to her mourning mothers and sisters on earth, to join the rejoicing ones in heaven.

Sister St. Ignatius two years later, and only twenty-six years of age like Sister St. Isabella, was taken from us to be equally regretted. Her superior talents and qualifications as a teacher had won the confidence of her pupils, when her illness and premature death brought mourning to them as well as to the community. A few weeks before her end, she was so happy as to receive holy Communion at the hand of her brother, Rev. John Neville, who celebrated his first Mass in our church. It was the last time our dear Sister had leave to go to the chapel. She seemed now to have but one wish it was to be united to her God who had answered the prayer nearest her heart: her brother was a priest and she an Ursuline!

Among our Lord's favored ones, "early called, early blest," we shall now mention Miss Sophie Bérubé of St. Michel, who was received Child of Mary in 1853, and entered the novitiate in 1856, to win the crown at the age of thirty-three, after ten years of cheerful labor in the service of the best of Masters. Perfection was the aim of our dear Sister's every act; a loving confidence in God sustained her courage, while it was doubtless the sweet reward of her fidelity to grace, her constant attention to perform the duties or fulfil the little offices that involve the sacrifice of one's own will and pleasure for the sake of others.

The gradual progress of that fatal disease to which she was naturally predisposed, could not be long arrested by the



tender care of watchful mothers and sisters, who would fain have purchased her restoration to health at any price. During the winter of 1868, a settled cough brought on other distressing symptoms, and soon our gentle Sister could foresee that the approaching end would not long be delayed. But with what peace, with what holy joy did she not welcome the summons and accept the sacred rites preparatory to the departure!

The prayers for the dying had been piously offered by the community, and as the "Bridegroom tarried," a part of the sisterhood had retired, leaving around the dying one the Sisters who knew her best, to watch with her to the end. After a little rest: "*Chantez un cantique sur le ciel, s'il vous plaît,*" said the faint voice. There was a little delay: who would be able to sing at such a moment? But the dying sister finds a voice and sings: "*Quand vous contemplerai-je, ô céleste séjour!*" The voice falters, all is silent; the longing spirit has gone forth in that sigh for heaven.

Two other names, united on memory's page in a similar manner to those of Sisters St. Isabella and St. Ignatius, are those of dear Sister Mary of the Presentation Matte, and Sister St. Monica Nault. Both were received into the Sodality in 1856, at the age of fifteen. Thus they were companions as pupils, but Miss Elzire Matte had bid adieu to her family at the age of twenty-one, and her too brief career was already accomplished when, in 1866, Miss Adèle Nault entered the novitiate, as if to perpetuate the examples of piety, fervor and fidelity to grace, which had been given there by our dear Sister Mary of the Presentation. We can only think of dear Adèle and Elzire as of children marked by the signet of sanctity from their earliest youth. We remember their first Communion, their place in class from year to year,

their reception into the sodalities in each department, until they both were happily invested with the insignia of the Children of Mary. All the years of their school-life were years of happy omen.

No one was surprised when Miss Elzire Matte asked her admission to the novitiate, nor was it then apparent that her health would fail so soon. But thus it had been ordained by Him who appoints to each of us the measure of our days. A rapid decline brought our dear Sister Mary of the Presentation the recompense promised to the pure in heart. She had worn the veil of the professed novice only a little more than two years.

Sister Adèle Nault of St. Monica was the second of the five daughters of Dr. Zephirin Nault, the physician of the community for many years, all of whom were pupils in our classes from the age of six or seven to the close of their education. Adèle's talents were of a high order; but her memory as a pupil is cherished still more for the loveliness of her character, in which modesty, gentleness, candor, gaiety, forgetfulness of self and readiness to oblige, were set off and enhanced by piety as sincere as it was unostentatious. Such a pupil at the head of a class, or the first of a division, renders more service to a teacher for the enforcement of discipline and the formation of character than can be told. Happily such pupils are found among the Children of Mary nearly every year, and they are ever remembered, even when they do not end their days like Adèle as members of the sisterhood.

As a novice Sister St. Monica's virtues were such as might be expected, knowing already her energetic character and her pious inclinations. After leaving school with the highest honors, she had spent a few years in her family, one of those truly Christian families where religion and virtue hold the

first place, and this had not interfered unfavorably with her accustomed practices of piety. What a consolation it was to dear Mother St. Andrew to welcome from her death-bed the entry of the two postulants, Adèle and her sister Emma! And what a day of rejoicing in the community was the 8th of September, 1868, which witnessed the consecration of these and two other promising subjects, Sisters Emma Cimon of St. John the Baptist and Céline Doré of the Presentation.

Four years more passed in the peaceful and happy fulfillment of daily duties under the sanction of obedience, thus rendered as pleasing and acceptable in the sight of Heaven as the incense of prayer before the altar of sacrifice. Sister St. Monica was the *doyenne* of twenty sister-novices and was about to take her place among the community nuns, where so qualified a subject was no doubt destined to render important services.

Such was the prospect when at the close of the vacation of 1872, our beloved Sister was suddenly attacked by a dangerous illness, so violent that not all the skill of the medical art could suffice to arrest its progress. The sacraments brought a temporary relief; but our dear Sister knew that it was the calm of approaching death. She had borne her sufferings with a patience and resignation only equalled by the sorrow and consternation of the community at this unlooked-for bereavement; and now she accepted the stroke of death as the merciful opening of the gates of heaven, where she would meet the beloved Spouse of her soul, for whom alone she might have desired to live and labor through the course of many years.

The year following the death of Sister St. Monica, another Child of Mary of 1855 heard the call from Paradise where perhaps our sweet Adèle had left "the golden gates ajar."

Our dear Sister St. Clotilda is ready to obey the call, although she has not yet completed the ninth year of her religious life. Before her change of name, our Sister was known as Miss Thersille Sénécal, and belonged to the parish of Longueuil near Montreal.

On being admitted to the novitiate her only ambition had been to become a true religious, and with this object in view the obligations and sacrifices of the religious life had seemed to her that "yoke" of the Lord which He has pronounced to be "light." Her piety, gentleness and generosity in the service of God were a source of edification to all around her, while the same qualities joined to her devotedness as a teacher, won the hearts of her pupils and enabled her to promote their best interest by her influence over them. But the brightest gems of her crown were yet to be earned, set in the pure gold of suffering. A long and tedious illness did not exhaust her patience, which she nourished by a constant remembrance of the Passion.

Pious and exemplary to the last, her name is ever mentioned with the affection and regret due to one who has lived for God alone, and served Him to the best of her power.

Sister St. Clotilda died October 30th, 1873, in the thirtieth year of her age.

It was during the month of March, 1874, that the community was called to mourn the premature loss of dear Sister Isabella McDonald of St. Stanislaus, a niece of our dear Mothers St. Andrew and St. John. She had labored chiefly among the pupils of the extern-school, but with what ardor, what zeal for their improvement, and above all for their progress in virtue! Her charity for the poorer class rendered her ingenious in finding means to procure them the articles of apparel which they most needed, and these were fashioned

by her own hands from old clothing or remnants which she had begged permission to dispose of in this way. Severe to herself while she was all kindness to others, her health was far undermined before it was perceived to be failing. Even when she could no longer rise from her bed the natural energy of her character deceived us so far, that the approach of death was perceived barely in time for the administration of the last sacraments. St. Joseph, to whom she was most devout, could not have failed to protect the last moments of his faithful client. Her act of resignation had long been prepared and her last look at the crucifix was one of utter trust, as her trembling lips softly murmured : " Into thy hands, O Lord, I commit my spirit."

She had devoted fourteen years to the service of God in the community where her memory is ever cherished ; and the touching examples of her piety and fervor will long be recounted as a source of edification and encouragement. At her decease, her companion of profession and twenty-seven sisters whose profession had followed here, were still at their labors.

Sister Ste. Félicité, known in the world as Miss Julie Thivierge, was received into the Sodality of the Children of Mary in 1853 with her sister Philomène and the Misses Sophie and Mathilde Bérubé. She was admitted to profession in 1858 with Sister Bérubé of St. Michel, while the two above-named sisters of the two Ursulines chose to serve God among the nuns of the Good Shepherd in another part of the city.

If Miss Thivierge had been the consolation of her teachers while a pupil, she was no less the edification of her Sisters and the joy of her mistress when a novice. Ready for every duty, seeing the will of God in that of her superiors,

prepared for every sacrifice, her daily life was equally peaceful and meritorious. Entrusted with the direction of a division as well as with a class soon after her profession, she continued to render service in these important offices till attacked by the severe symptoms of the malady which was destined to end her earthly existence.

Beloved and esteemed by her pupils, who had appreciated her maternal kindness, and her gentle yet firm exercise of authority, she had the consolation of exerting a salutary influence over their conduct even from her sick-room. A word of encouragement or advice written by their good Mother Ste. Félicité was ever received with joy and acted upon with touching fidelity. It was in Mary's month, May 14th, 1877, at the age of forty years, that our beloved Sister, Mary's faithful servant, was called to enjoy the reward promised to those who "instruct others unto righteousness." She had passed twenty years in this blessed employ, and of such Scripture says that they "shine like the stars of heaven to all eternity."

With the memory of Sister Ste. Félicité, we naturally associate that of Sister Marie du Carmel, a sister-novice and a co-laborer during many years, although in another department. Known in the world as Miss Olympe Gagnon, and admitted to the novitiate after passing several years in our classes, Sister Marie du Carmel was an efficient teacher and willingly spent herself for the advancement of her pupils. Charged in the department of the half-boarders with the studies which constitute the Course of Literature, at the same time that she was the directress of the senior division, she knew how to render her classes pleasant and her teaching useful. Many an ingenious device was adopted whereby to nourish their piety, direct their imagination and form their

character. From the overflowing source in her own heart, she drew forth, now a maxim to be unfolded in the form of a composition, now a lively but useful remark which falling unexpectedly, was apt to make an indelible impression.

Leaving her cell after a restless night, she entered the infirmary for a little repose before repairing to the class-room. An hour later medical aid was called in, only to find our dear Sister attacked by a dangerous malady from which it was probable she could not recover. The sentence was received with the tranquillity of one who had foreseen the hour, and had daily lived prepared to offer at any moment the sacrifice of her life.

There are circumstances when every thing conspires to augment the grief of a mourner and to render it overwhelming. Thus it was on this occasion, when one among us beheld her only sister dying, while the death of their aged mother had been hastened by hearing of the serious illness of her daughter ! Their souls set free from the incumbrance of the body and all its ills, were happily united before either was aware of the release of the other.

The bereaved one, Mother Ste. Antoinette Gagnon, since appointed to guide the community in the office of Superior, found comfort in the sympathy with which she was surrounded, while the touching grief of the pupils was another proof that in calling our beloved Sister to Himself, Our Lord had rewarded one who had faithfully sought to do good to their souls. She labored in the vineyard twenty-six years since her profession, and attained the age of forty-seven years.

Other names appear on the list of the deceased Children of Mary, not one of which could be written without suggesting sweet thoughts of the dear departed. Some of them won their crown almost at the first hour of the day ; others at the

third, or at a later hour of their labor. Among the latter would be found Céline Doré of the Presentation, whose profession we have mentioned already. Her death occurred in 1880, after fourteen years of faithful labor, while the same year Sister Emma Turcotte of St. Dominique, only seven years professed, hastened to seize her reward with the same fervor that had urged her at every moment "never to spare herself, nor to miss an opportunity to oblige another."

Next on the list, we meet the names of the two Misses McDonald. The youngest generously offered herself for the labors of the new Convent at Stanstead. She bore the name of Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart, and has already won the reward of a fervent, pure and holy life. Sister Mary Ann McDonald of St. Benedict had been retained by the duties she owed her family till a more advanced age than would have been her choice. But with what avidity she sought to make amends, as it were, for delay, and with such success that her crown was won with the close of her noviceship. Professed in 1874, she passed away in 1880.

We shall only mention one more Child of Mary, Sister Malvina Pouliot of St. Alphonse, whose feeble health had sustained the labors of ten years when she departed from among us in 1883, rich in the merit of the virtues she had practised with unremitting fervor. Her love of poverty and its sister virtues, mortification and humility, was remarkable. Intelligent and fond of study, she was most ingenious in devising means to communicate knowledge to the pupils under her charge. Several of her devices were such as, in other hands and, perhaps we should add—in other lands—would have been patented to serve the cause of education and to enrich the fortunate patentee. But her ambition was only to benefit her pupils and to fulfil in the best possible manner



her duty towards them. Her end long foreseen was prepared for in the peace of a conscience without reproach, leaving her community comforted by the assurance that their loss was to her an eternal gain.

Without pursuing these brief notices further, we can only declare that the dear unnamed Sisters who have been called to their reward since 1833, the date of the last we have given, had with equal edification accomplished the duties of their state, and now that they "sleep in the Lord", each has her place in the affectionate remembrance of the community.

"Tender memories cling around them  
Like the ivy on the trees,  
Memories of the dead and saintly,  
Sweet as breath of southern breeze".

They are still a part of the cloistered family, whose links when broken by death, are repaired, like those of the families of the world, in another more lasting home where joy is perennial and where mourning and tears are unknown.

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## CHAPTER XIX

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GOLDEN JUBILEES OF THE LAST DECADE, 1879-1889

MOTHER ST. JANE DE CHANTAL *née* VICTORIA WHITE

1830-1880-1885

Among the seven jubilarians of the last decade, from 1879 to 1889, four were addressed in English, their mother-tongue. This circumstance will enable us to initiate our readers into the spirit of these celebrations within the cloister, by citing

some of the metrical compliments, which take the form of a little poem, or a simple song, according to the occasion or the inspiration of the hour.

Let us introduce first Mother St. Jane de Chantal, née White, who made profession in 1830, under the superiority of Mother St. Henry.

"Three young ladies from New York, under the protection of Bishop Dubois, one of them to enter the novitiate, the others the boarding-school," is the entry in our Annals, at the date of June 24th, 1828.

This new candidate for the cloister was Miss Victoria White, born and baptized in the American metropolis, of parents who were natives of Catholic Ireland. Miss White was eighteen years of age, but so diminutive in stature that had it not been for the perfect symmetry of form and feature, she might have passed for a child of twelve. It was long remembered in the community that Mother St. Helen, impressed with the childlike appearance of her little postulant, now resting fast asleep from the fatigue of her long journey, would call in the Sisters as they passed before the door of the novitiate, to point out to them the baby hands and feet of the new comer.

But Miss Victoria White needed only to be known to justify a homely proverb which was quite applicable in her case. With the habit and veil of the order, the postulant received the name of St. Jane de Chantal, and entered with alacrity upon the duties assigned her, anxious only to correspond to the grace of her vocation and become a true religious. Although she was never robust in health, her usefulness, whether in the class-room or in other offices, was most satisfactory. The severity of our Canadian winters caused her more suffering than the tropical heat of Texas, and her long sojourn there was not a preparation to meet the rigors

of the climate with less difficulty on her return home. Yet was she enabled to render service here again during several years in the various offices of Depositary, Assistant, and Mistress of novices.

On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of our dear Mother in 1880, the pupils offered a festive entertainment, with the reading of the subjoined ode.

ON THE GOLDEN JUBILEE OF REV. MOTHER ST JANE DE CHANTAL

" Within thy courts, O Lord, how sweet to dwell ;  
How sweet to love and serve Thee, none can tell !  
My soul with pious longings pines away,  
As all Thy mercies I review to-day.

" 'Twas long ago, responding to Thy call,  
To home I bade adieu, to friends, to all  
The world could offer ; choosing Thee alone  
To be my portion. Fifty years have flown,  
Making those sacred ties more precious still,  
And binding me to Thee with firmer will.  
Oh ! what return, dear Lord, can I propose ?  
How speak the gratitude my full heart knows ?  
The promised ' hundred-fold ' e'en here below,  
Has been my share ; and well I know  
Eternal life Thou hast in store for me.  
Ah ! when shall dawn *that* Golden Jubilee ! "

Thus in her ecstasy our Mother prayed,  
And of her ardent soul, the depths betrayed ;  
While we with joy our kindest greeting brought,  
Our simple offerings, with affection fraught.

Yes ! fifty years ago a novice came  
Before this altar with her heart aflame.  
Slight was her form and gentle was her mien :  
Angels rejoiced, friends wept the touching scene,  
As that fair maiden signed her solemn vow,  
And sang : " My spouse hath set upon my brow  
His signet. Veiled, I'm now His happy bride ;  
No earthly love shall e'er my heart divide."

That blissful hour, long past, O MOTHER DEAR,  
 Rises all fresh upon this Fiftieth year.  
 The lovely autumn morn with sky serene,  
 Seems to depict what your career has been ;  
 How peaceful and how pure that blameless life,  
 Given all to God, " remote from care and strife."  
 What pen or pencil fully could portray  
 The countless merits even of one day,  
 Where every moment, aimed by love divine,  
 The wealth of worlds unnumbered doth outshine ?  
 Whether in training youth, to walk secure  
 In " Wisdom's ways," and endless joys ensure ;  
 Whether in fervent prayer, and converse sweet  
 With God, at His most Holy Will, how fleet  
 Have sped the years ! .....  
 ..... Shall I, dear Mother, tell  
 How to your Convent home you bade farewell  
 When, moved by holy zeal, a distant land  
 Beheld you come, to lend a gen'rous hand  
 In long and arduous labors ? Texas learned  
 To bless your name. And when at length you turned  
 After the lapse of nineteen burning years,  
 Your footsteps homeward, many were the tears  
 That wept the parting.—But how glad the cheer  
 That greeted your arrival, Mother dear !  
 How rang the joy-bells through our cloistered home,  
 When you were sheltered safe, no more to roam !  
 And since, twelve other summers gliding by  
 In peace, nor weighing on you heavily  
 Have proved the a'lage, in their rapid flight :  
 " Sweet is the burden of the Lord, his yoke is light ! "

The faithful SPOUSE OF JESUS asks no rest  
 But at His feet, and still at His behest,  
 She labors in the vineyard ; now to guide  
 Our toiling *Marthas* who in her confide ;  
 Now, young and tender plants she trains secure,  
 By wise example, and by counsel sure.  
 Permit us then, dear Mother, in the song  
 That from our full hearts joyous pours along,

To greet you ; while our prayers, on wings of love,  
Call richest blessings on you from above.  
Oh ! what will be in Heaven the bliss untold,  
When we all gathered there, within the fold,  
In that dear *fête* which lasts eternally  
Shall celebrate that GOLDEN JUBILEE !

Mother St. Jane de Chantal's eulogium may be comprised in a few words : she was truly a model religious. Her uniform fidelity to every duty, her zeal for the instruction of youth, her unbounded charity, united to tender piety, rendered her very dear to her community, and when (1885) at the age of seventy-five, a few years after the joyful celebration of the 50th anniversary of her profession, a brief illness ended in a calm and peaceful exchange of life for immortality, the dear departed was as sincerely mourned as her memory has been lovingly and reverently cherished.

MOTHER ST. PAUL, NÉE JEANNE LÉTOURNEAU

1830-1880-1890

With Miss White, another young lady, Miss Jeanne Létourneau, had taken the veil in 1828, adopting the name of Sister St. Paul. They celebrated together the 50th anniversary of their profession, in September 1880. Mother St. Paul alone was destined to the rarer honors of the Diamond Jubilee.

Miss Létourneau is another of those truly precious subjects recruited for the community from that parish so fertile in religious vocations, St. Pierre du Sud. From her earliest years Jeanne's only care had been to please God and "obey His commandments," even as she was taught by her good parents.

Entering religion at the age of seventeen, her delight was to converse with God in prayer, to visit Him in the holy tabernacle, to serve Him by acts of charity exercised towards all whom she could succor or oblige. Her life was like that of the lowly violet, hidden in the verdant turf and ready to be forgotten, were it not for the sweet perfume which betrays its presence. In the care of the sick as infirmarian, in the duty of seamstress, preparing clothing for the sisterhood, in teaching or in the charge of portress and in the office of zelatrix, the fervent spouse of Jesus found her delight, and daily embellished her crown by the utmost fidelity in little things as in great, serving God as if she " beheld Him face to face."

Our good Mother St. Paul had the consolation of seeing six of her nieces Ursulines, three of them in her own community. The eldest of these, Rev. Mother Mary of the Assumption, had lately been elected Superior when occurred the Diamond Jubilee of our venerable *doyenne*, September 30th, 1890.

Of her other nieces, one occupied at the time the charge of Assistant-Superior in our new foundation at Roberval, another the same position in Stanstead, and a third at Waterville, a foundation from the Ursuline Convent of Three Rivers.

From these circumstances this Diamond Jubilee was one of unwonted *éclat*. Greetings and festal offerings poured in from all the religious communities of the city, as well as from Three Rivers, Roberval, Stanstead and Waterville.

The beloved jubilarian, although feeble, had enjoyed the celebration, especially the joyful sacred chants, the touching exhortation, the sisterly greeting which revived the fadeless memories of that other day when first she had vowed her young life to her Maker's service in that same quiet chapel.

The Mothers and Sisters of that "long ago" were not around her to-day, she missed the companion of her consecration to God; but would she not soon rejoin them all in that world where there is naught but unalloyed happiness?

Alas! for earthly joys. Even in the convent contrasted scenes are frequent. Only one short month after these rejoicings, a mortal illness, in the space of a few days, reduced the aged Mother to the last extremity. Yet all was peace around that dying couch. The sacraments received, the prayers for a departing soul softly murmured, a last look at the crucifix, a last sigh and all is over. Nothing remains but the mournful bier, the solemn requiem, the humble grave, around which, however, memory still keeps her vigils while hope points upward to the home of the blest, and whispers: "She is there!"

MOTHER ST. SCHOLASTICA (MARY TERESA SHERLOCK)

1831-1881-1883

Next on our lists in the order of profession, after the name of Mother St. Paul, is that of Sister Mary Teresa Sherlock. Born of Irish parents in London, England, in 1806, Miss Sherlock's education was well advanced when her father, Mr. James Sherlock, came to Canada with his family, consisting of his wife and several sons and daughters.

Mary Teresa, after passing six months in studying the French language in our classes, entered the novitiate, and was admitted to the emission of her vows, November 10th, 1831.

Employed as a teacher in our English classes at the *externat*, the only Catholic school in Quebec at that time where the young girls of the Irish congregation of Saint Patrick's

could obtain suitable religious instruction, Sister St. Scholastica was indefatigable in her efforts to benefit her pupils, by inculcating in their young hearts the principles of our holy religion, at the same time that she sought their advancement in the other branches of an elementary course of studies.

Many of these children were poor, and often was their teacher's heart wrung with pity at the sight of their wan faces and tattered garments. Then was she eloquent in pleading for the means to relieve their distress, means which the good Superior, Mother St. Henry, liberally, yet prudently bestowed as often as possible.

In later years, Sister St. Scholastica was employed among the boarders, teaching English in classes where patience and pains-taking are especially required owing to the French origin of the majority of the pupils.

Till an advanced age she was employed at the institute, and every where her earnest efforts for the improvement of her pupils were crowned with success. Her tastes were notably artistic, and specimens of her fancy work and embroidery, are easily recognized by those who have once examined her handiwork.

Her deep piety and truly religious spirit alone sufficed to sustain her under the sufferings and infirmities with which it pleased Our Lord to visit her during the latter part of her life. Ever patient and cheerful, if acute pains forced the tears to her eyes, she would quickly exclaim : " Oh ! it is nothing. The tears will come ; I can't help it."

All her lifetime she entertained a tender interest in the welfare of her family, and was ever sensible to their varying fortunes, rejoicing or mourning with them with true sisterly affection. In her deep sorrow, when occurred the



death of her father and mother within the space of one short month, one of the sisterhood offered her sympathy in the following lines.

O Sister! weep not: side by side  
All peacefully they take their rest.  
Their faithful souls naught could divide;  
Their life was sweet, their death, how blest!  
Why wouldst thou weep? Their lamp was bright,  
Their crown all glowing in the sky;  
Their souls were ready for the flight  
To purer regions there on high.  
Why wouldst thou weep? The holy ties  
That bound them, for a moment riven,  
Are now renewed in yonder skies;  
Behold! they bless thee now from heaven!

In 1881, Mother St. Scholastica celebrated her Golden Jubilee, receiving the tokens of grateful affection which former pupils and friends delight to offer on such occasions. Among them all, none was more beautiful nor more highly prized than a delicate piece of embroidery in fish-scales, wrought by the hands of her own sister, Mother St. Teresa, a professed nun, and since Superior in the Ursuline Convent of St. Martin, Brown County, Ohio. The following ode, characteristic of her nationality was offered by the novices.

ODE FOR THE GOLDEN JUBILEE OF MOTHER ST.  
SCHOLASTICA.

November 10th. 1881.

Far across the great deep, from the green Isle of Erin,  
That land where the Saints seem to spring from the sod,  
To the Land of the West, came a fair youthful maiden,  
The crown of fond parents, their "present from God."

All in vain were the charms of the world or its pleasures,  
For her heart was attracted by more lasting treasures ;  
And rapt was her soul by the entrancing measures  
Of a strain, more melodious than : "*Erin go bragh!*"

'Twas the Hymn of the Virgin train, known to no other,  
Save their own choir resplendent, in vesture so white ;  
With the Lamb, in the midst of "green pastures," they gather,  
And, attuning their harps in His praises unite.  
It was thus the young maiden, her high hopes reposing  
On the promise of Jesus, her secret disclosing,  
Bade adieu to dear friends, who her purpose opposing,  
Would fain have retained her with "*Erin go bragh.*"

How bright was the sky on that November morning,  
When light thro' the cloister the gleeful news sped !  
How clear did the merry bells ring out the warning,  
"The Bride stands arrayed her dear Jesus to wed !"  
And since that great day, oft the same vows repeating,  
What a wealth there's in store for the moments so fleeting  
Of a life, all for God,—and in heaven what a meeting !  
While angels sing "welcome" and "*Alleluia!*"

Now that "bride" in her *Jubilee* honors rejoices,  
The rare "*Golden Wedding*", the Fiftieth Year.  
With her transports we mingle our jubilant voices,  
And high lift the choral strain, mellow and clear.  
'Tis the deep tide of gratitude, from its fount welling,  
In the heart where the Spirit of God is indwelling ;  
And that stream, ever full, with its bright waves all swelling,  
Makes music, e'en sweeter than "*Erin go bragh.*"

One day, dearest Mother, a fadeless crown wearing,  
The ills of life ended, its dangers all o'er,  
With the Virgin choir counted, their happy fate sharing,  
Their canticle sweet thou shalt sing evermore.  
Ere this festive day passes, its golden rays spending,  
Let our wishes and greetings, with dulcet notes blending,  
Be the pledge of affection's pure incense ascending .  
In prayer, while we sing again "*Erin go bragh.*"

In 1878, Mother St. Scholastica's death, long foreseen through her many infirmities, brought her the reward of her seventy-six years, of which fifty-five had been spent in religion.

MOTHER ST. PHILIP (MISS LOUISE AYLWIN)

1832-1882-1893

When in the early springtide of 1830, Miss Louisa, daughter of the Hon. Judge Aylwin, called upon the Superior of the convent to ask her admission to the novitiate, the prudent Mother must have hesitated to encourage her project. Slight in figure, delicate in complexion and health, apparently fond of the gaieties of the society of Quebec, of which she had seen much since leaving the convent three years previous, how had she learned to despise the world, how would she support the austerity of the religious life? On the other hand, Louisa had been carefully brought up by her mother, who was a fervent Catholic; she had been remarked at school for her tender piety, her love for her religion, which, alas for them! was not that of her father nor her brothers.

Louisa urged her suit. Mother St. Henry consulted with her counsellors, and the young candidate was admitted to test her vocation by the exercises of the novitiate. Subsequently she took the veil with the name of Sister St. Philip. The delicate health of the novice continued to be a source of anxiety, but her many excellent qualities, her persevering desire to consecrate herself to God, the knowledge of the dangers to which she would be exposed in the world, and on the other hand, the thought of the happiness it would be for her to become a religious, decided the nuns to admit her to profession. Yet this delicate frame was destined to last, and

to bear the burden of life-long ailings, ever light-hearted, ever grateful to the Lord for the favor of dwelling in His House, among His chosen ones.

Mother St. Philip's delight was to be with the children, to teach them, ever inculcating the principles of our holy religion, to win their hearts to God by showing them every kindness. Even when age and increased infirmities rendered it impossible for her to teach a class, still she loved to visit them, to have an opportunity of doing them good by a kind word or act, manifesting the same interest in them as in former years she had shown their mothers or perhaps their grandmothers.

Of all our Sister's amiable qualities and virtues, none has left us so lasting an impression as her unfeigned and never failing charity.

With her, kindness seemed no studied act, but rather the spontaneous impulse of a heart overflowing with that love which finds its well-spring in the loving Heart of our Blessed Lord. Acts of charity seemed so necessary to her own happiness that she was most ingenious in discovering occasions to give pleasure or render service. Weariness or pain was not sufficient to prevent her from welcoming her Sisters with a cheerful smile, and often would a gay repartee instead of an account of her sufferings be the unexpected response to their words of inquiry.

Thus gently flowed the stream of time till eighty-three years had filled the measure allotted to our venerable *doyenne*. A severe attack of the "grippe" was the signal for a departure long foreseen and calmly prepared for. This took place on the 2nd of January, 1893.

Mother St. Philip was greeted as a Jubilarian in September, 1882. The novices of that date took part in the celebration

by inviting the dear Mother to their gaily decorated hall and sang in her honor to the accompaniment of harp, guitar and piano, the following song composed for the occasion.

SONG FOR THE GOLDEN WEDDING OF OUR VERY  
DEAR MOTHER ST. PHILIP.

Sept. 6th, 1882.

Haste with songs of gladness,  
On this joyful day,  
To our gentle Mother  
Greetings kind convey!

Fifty years have glided  
Down the stream of life,  
All with merit freighted,  
All with blessings rife.

Never, gentle Mother,  
Could our poor words tell,  
How the love of Jesus,  
In your heart doth dwell.

Like a golden censer,  
Whence doth perfume rise,  
Ever sends your pure soul  
Incense to the skies.

From the morning's rising  
To the evening's wane,  
Prayer, or loving labor,  
Or long hours of pain;

Such has been the garland  
Twined thro' *Fifty years*;  
And how richly glowing  
This bright wreath appears!

Greeting thee, dear Mother,  
Lovingly we come;  
Bright the Golden Wedding  
In our cloister-home.

CHORUS. Joy bells merrily, ring out cheerily ;  
Bright birds on the wing,  
Lend us notes to sing !  
Oh ! what notes of glee, to sing the Golden Jubilee !

In our love we crown thee  
While our songs so gay,  
Greet thee, gentle Mother,  
On thy *Golden-Wedding Day*.

MOTHER ST. ANNE (MISS SERAPHINE TRUTEAU)

1834-1884-1888

On the first of January, 1888, the three most aged nuns of the community, Mother St. Gabriel, Mother St. Anne and Mother St. John, were together the inmates of the infirmary. Before the end of February, their graves had been filled. Our three dear elders had disappeared, leaving a void which will long be felt, and a memory which will never be forgotten.

It is a grateful task to devote a memorial page here to dear Mother St. Anne.

Miss Séraphine Truteau, was born in 1798, in Montreal, of an honorable family, which gave to the Church a distinguished clergyman in the person of her brother Very Rev. Truteau, V. G. She entered our novitiate at the age of thirty-four, her health not permitting her to execute sooner the pious desire which she had nourished since the age of fifteen.

This long experience of life, joined to a sound judgment and a solid education, enabled Mother St. Anne to render important services to the community of her adoption in the offices of Assistant and Zelatrix, but especially in the treatment of the sick. Possessing much medical skill both natural

and acquired, she used it with that kindness of word and manner which are more valued by the patient than the soothing prescription.

Her experience in the care of the sick was a great relief to the infirmarian, who could depend upon her presence by the dying, as upon the most skilful of physicians, while her piety was a comfort to the dear patient by whose bedside she would keep watch with the tenderness of a mother, till the last sigh had ended the last combat.

No one could be more zealous for the strict observance of the rule than was Mother St. Anne, whose spirit was in perfect accordance with the traditions of the house.

Our good Mother was not spared the suffering and the merit of a state of helplessness, which confined her to the infirmary during the last fifteen months of her life. There she continued to edify the community by her assiduity to prayer which, without the aid of books, filled her days with that intercessory sacrifice so pleasing to God and so useful to souls. Ever cheerful and enlivening her conversation by many an anecdote of her younger days, or drawing from her well-stored mind the sayings of the wise and good, her visitors received the pleasure which they had intended to convey, and thus reaped a double benefit from an act of charity.

Early in January, 1888, a cold on the lungs gave some cause of anxiety; and our pious Mother asked to be fortified by the last sacraments. Her experience of the sick had turned to her own advantage, for death was really approaching. It had no terrors for the dear patient, who preserved her presence of mind and her serenity to the last, calmly resigning her soul to Him who gave it, on the 14th of January, at the age of ninety, of which she had spent fifty-two in the religious life.

## GOLDEN JUBILEE OF MOTHER STE. PHILOMENE

On a preceding page we have given a brief notice of Mother Ste. Philomène, as one of Mother St. Andrew's novices.

In 1888, she was still listening to the piano or the harp, during the hours devoted by the novices to their practice on these instruments.

That same year occurred the celebration of her Golden Jubilee of profession. Three of those who had been her companions in the novitiate were near her. An ode composed by one of them on this occasion we here subjoin.

TO DEAR MOTHER STE. PHILOMENE ON THE OCCASION OF  
HER GOLDEN JUBILEE

As when in sunset glow, the azure skies  
Of faintest hue mingle with golden dyes  
In mellowed lustre, till the vista seems  
The gate of heaven, opened to fancy's dreams ;  
E'en thus, dear Mother, turning to the past,  
The countless blessings o'er thy pathway cast  
Awake within thy soul emotions sweet,  
As now thy Golden Jubilee we greet.

Long years ago dawned that auspicious day  
When Jesus for His Bride chose thee, alway.  
Thy cloistered Mothers led thee to His feet,  
And Sisters waited, tenderly to greet  
The happy one. But where are they to-day,  
Those Mothers dear, those Sisters, where are they ?  
Gone many ! gone to God ! yet there remain  
Some scattered pearls of that long silvery chain  
So lustrous then. Ah ! through those fifty years,  
Oft was its broken ! oft bedewed with tears.



But let us now recall that solemn hour  
When the strong will of youth asserts its power ;  
Viewing outspread a broad and flowery way,  
Where pleasure leads a giddy throng astray,  
And yet resolves to make a wiser choice,  
Listening all docile to the Saviour's voice.

Oh, what a moment ! With the light-winged dove  
That seeks its rest in some secure alcove,  
The soul its pinions lifts and upward soars  
Above the region where the tempest roars.  
In one bold sweep she cleaves the darksome clouds,  
In Jesus' Heart, her fate she safely shrouds.

Thus, Mother dear, didst thou obey the call,  
And for thy Saviour's love abandon all !  
And now, when Fifty years have swiftly fled,  
Still doth the sacrifice its fragrance shed.  
During that space, what victories were thine !  
What "crowns of justice" waiting for thee, shine !  
How many youthful hearts to virtue won,  
What treasures in a life for God alone !  
Where all was lowly, but the wish sublime  
That Jesus might be loved in every clime.

Behold, dear Mother, gathered here to-day,  
Thy pupils, past and present, to convey  
Our grateful wishes and our greetings kind :  
Deep in our hearts thy name beloved is shrined.  
We sought a garland for thy brow, and lo !  
Fresh roses bloomed and lilies white as snow,  
Sweet emblems these of purity and love,  
Till Jesus crown His faithful spouse above.  
Yet haste thee not ! among us still delay ;  
For this our loving hearts united pray.

Six years were added to her long and peaceful career,  
years of quiet occupation, suited to her feebler state of  
health : years of union with God by prayer and recollection,  
less interrupted than formerly, but possibly not more real.

The end came, as might have been foretold, all beautiful in its gentleness<sup>1</sup>. A slight cold affecting the lungs, a few days of uncertainty as to the gravity of the malady, which is then declared beyond remedy. The calm of perfect resignation; the last consolations of holy Church; the last adieu and the last sigh: "Sweet Jesus, receive my spirit," and all is over for this life. O blessed Faith which unfolds the brighter future of a happiness that knows no end!

1.—Extract from a letter written by the son of M. Derby, Esq. (Sister St. Philomena's guardian) on receiving news of her decease.

"I have this moment received your letter, containing the news of the death of Sister St. Philomena. This intelligence I have at once sent to my brother and sister in Boston, and you may be sure it will be received by them as it has been by me, with sincere sorrow. From my earliest years, the name of Mary Kelly, or Sister Philomena, has been like a household word. As years went on I have always, when in Canada, gone out of my way to visit our old family-friend. I have enjoyed the hearty welcome of our dear Sister in the company of my mother, of my wife, and last summer, I took my little daughter with me.

What a beautiful life hers was! In this age of utilitarianism what more unusual than this picture of a lovely, pure-souled woman, apart from the world, teaching generation after generation. Her friends I found every where, and it was always a passport to recognition, if I mentioned the Sister's name to new acquaintances in the province of Quebec. May her memory never fade in your community and may her example never die!"

RICHARD DERBY.

New York, Jan. 11th, 1894.

## CHAPTER XX

OUR VENERABLE CHAPLAIN'S SACERDOTAL JUBILEE HERALDS  
THE PEACEFUL CLOSE OF A HOLY LIFE

It was in 1889. Fifty years had elapsed since the youthful Levite had been invested with the august privileges and powers of the priesthood. But since three or four years our venerable Father's health had failed so far that now it was necessary for him to have an assistant for the duties of his charge. His daily mass, with an hour or two in the confessional, was all that his feeble frame would permit.

The 16th of March must therefore pass unobserved. So our good Father had decided; yet the prohibition did not prevent the execution of a choice selection of sacred music during the anniversary Mass, nor the presentation of appropriate tokens of regard and souvenirs of the occasion.

The following little poem remains to us, recalling sweet memories of the years our ever cherished friend and Father devoted to the interests and happiness of the inmates of the cloister.

## THE GOLDEN JUBILEE

March 16th, 1839 1889

DEAR REVEREND FATHER,

Must this hallowed DAY

Be silent? all its bright hours pass away

Without an echo in that Cloister dear,

Your own "Sweet Home" since many a happy year?

What joyous festive scenes before us rise,

As to the past we turn with pensive eyes!

How did the Convent's inmates haste to pay  
Their grateful homage on St. George's day!  
What merriment around! In thought, how we  
Would celebrate your Golden Jubilee!  
Trusting that, as our obligations grew,  
So health prolonged might arm with vigor new;  
Nor sickness, with her cruel train, appear,  
Casting her shadow o'er the Convent dear,  
Ever *your* home whate'er may be in store,  
Whether returning strength, and long years more,  
As we would fondly hope; or, if not given  
Your peaceful harbour, till the port of heaven.

Still, o'er the past, lit up with vivid ray,  
Let untired Fancy poise her wing to-day.  
O wondrous scene, now half a century gone!  
How glowed the altar in that early dawn!  
And how august the Pontiff, as with rite  
Sublime, he stood amid the silvery light,  
As of the Holy Spirit brooding there;  
While hands imposed and consecrating prayer,  
Transform the YOUTHFUL LEVITE in that hour,  
And crown him with the priesthood's awful power.  
Henceforth, obedient to his whispered word,  
A God descends, and heaven's high court is stirred!  
The Precious Blood, once shed on Calvary's height,  
In cleansing stream flows o'er the soul contrite;  
And sacramental graces, at a sign,  
Issue abundant from their source divine.  
Thus gloriously commenced that bright career,  
Of which this day completes the FIFTIETH YEAR.

What were the young priest's labors, what success  
Was seen his sacred ministry to bless,  
What fruits were gathered?—'Tis not ours to tell.

Another period came, on which to dwell  
Is our delight, we of the Cloister's shade.  
With lingering pleasant, let it be surveyed

To-day, all grateful.

Four and thirty years  
OUR FATHER, GUIDE AND FRIEND! how rich appears,  
And how indelible in Mem'ry's shrine,  
The record, sacred in its ev'ry line.  
Yes! on this DAY, the Past before me lies,  
Like some rich landscape, tinged with golden dyes.  
There, one far-distant point attracts my sight:  
'Tis Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, a picture bright!  
Her spacious, lightsome, well-filled halls are new;  
Examinations pass in long review.  
Closing the session, some allusion's made  
To College days: "Amusement's car conveyed  
Far up the Hill of Science"—Pleasant strife  
For youthful minds, thought we; and soon to life  
*The Convent Journal* rose, on agile wing  
Beyond the eastern inner court to bring  
News of the Cloister. Under fostering care,  
Beauty and usefulness are still its share.  
How patiently our Father would peruse  
Those feeble pages, feigning they amuse  
From graver duties. Line by line was scanned,  
The gold set free from dross with careful hand.  
Thus, with new ardor, youthful minds were fired;  
To scale Parnassus' heights each one aspired.

Meanwhile, as peaceful fled, year after year,  
The studious pupils that assembled here,  
The same unwearied kindness have received,  
The same DEAR FRIEND has with them joy'd or grieved;  
With the same zeal did he his hours devote,  
Learning and science ever to promote,  
Was he less thoughtful of the hours of play?  
Come, dearest friends! thro' pleasant arcades stray;  
Follow the shady walks, or here admire  
The toys, the games, that children most desire;  
In winter, view the snow-hill, towering high,  
And see the sledges gay that swift go by.

And when came round, from passing year to year,  
That work of love to ev'ry pastor dear,  
To teach God's " little ones " their destiny,  
Their hearts prepare for the great mystery,  
Can you, dear chosen ones, forget the zeal,  
The tender care for your eternal weal,  
You, who successive stood around his knee ?  
As younger shoots replace the parent-tree,  
Mother and child, from the same lips to learn,  
To serve your God, with His dear love to burn.

How happy, closing the scholastic year,  
Our Father stood with friends and parents dear,  
Prizes to give and Graduates to crown !  
Their joys, their well-earned triumphs, were his own.  
Yet happier still the day, and more serene,  
That consecrated to the Heavenly Queen  
Their youthful hearts ;—or heard the sacred vows  
That gave the Lord of Heaven another Spouse.

Was it less sweet a privilege to stay  
The soul's last parting ?—all her fears allay,  
Pointing the trembling dove to that abode  
Of peace and bliss, the bosom of her God ?

And shall we e'er forget the patient care,  
The nightly vigils, and the tedious wear  
Of labors, which are prized at their full worth,  
When our *Monastic History* went forth ?  
Not for the Cloister only was the gain ;  
Throughout the land it linked tradition's chain,  
Unlocking streams from sources long concealed,  
That deeds of pious ancestry revealed.  
Later, the same GOOD FRIEND pointed the way ;  
At his desire, " *The Glimpses* " saw the day.

Meantime, to honor an historic name,  
The pride of Brescia on her lists of fame,  
Of Ursulines the Foundress well-beloved,  
A Confraternity had been approved.

SAINT ANGELA's examples safely lead ;  
In virtue's paths her clients walk with speed.  
How zealous did the good DIRECTOR seek  
To win young souls to imitate the meek  
Maiden of Brescia. Writings, and discourse,  
And monthly Mass, unite their triple force.  
In all, his aim, the precious soul to save ;  
To fortify, where rose temptation's wave.  
Oh ! how our Father's heart had beat with joy,  
And deemed it bliss on earth without alloy,  
Had he beheld from Rome the favor sought,  
The *nimbus* of the Saint, so dearly bought,  
And Mother Guyart's name, as SAINTE MARIE,  
Invoked upon his GOLDEN JUBILEE !

But further why attempt the long review  
Of such a Past ? Each moment vistas new,  
Pleasant to sight and destined ne'er to fade,  
Open on ev'ry side in Mem'ry's glade :  
And Echo hears that voice, e'en as of old,  
Ready to sanction, not adventuring bold,  
But ever willing wisely to approve  
The progress timely, or the prudent move.

Now, 'tis the Convent walls that grow apace,  
As wider halls are needed, to replace  
Some time-worn structure ; or to make more room ;  
While Normal schools in dawning prospect loom ;  
Or larger parlors ; lodgings more complete,  
Where the young novice finds her calm retreat.

Now, while the future opens to his view,  
He hails the project of a convent new,  
To rise on shores that still half-buried lie  
In the primeval forests, where the sky,  
Mirror'd in waters bright, will soon outspread  
O'er populations, gathered by the tread  
Of iron steam-horse.

Then, ere ardor wanes,  
Another convent's seen on Stanstead's plains ;

Another scion, parted from that tree  
So firmly rooted in security,  
That through the storms' two centuries have seen,  
And more, its spreading branches still are green.

Truly 'tis Heaven's own boon, A FRIEND sincere,  
In prudence unsurpassed, in counsel clear,  
In doctrine sure. Intelligent, refined,  
Learned, and rich in gifts of heart and mind,  
Such as befit the scholar and the sage,  
Worthy the confidence of youth and age;  
One whose devotion, pure as Eastern skies,  
Has never seen a cloud to mar its dyes,  
Winning all souls to God with equal care;  
Such was the FRIEND, the GUIDE, so long our share!

As when some goodly ship, now homeward bound  
With riches laden, lighter barks surround,  
Watching with joy the lull of every breeze  
That still detains her in their quiet seas,  
And fearing, lest with glorious sails unfurled,  
They see her glide across the watery world  
To disappear in yon horizon, where  
The sunset's brightest hues are glowing fair;

So, we surround you, FATHER, and we pray  
To still detain you with us many a day,  
Knowing the riches safe, secure the tide,  
Oh! hasten not; but long with us abide!

We'll guard the memory of other days,  
FATHER BELOVED! to cheer and guide our ways,  
While fragrant wreaths entwining your dear name,  
A life-long debt of gratitude proclaim!

Although all earthly scenes must fade away,  
The GOLDEN JUBILEE OF HEAVEN shall ever stay,  
And reunite our hearts in God's dear love:  
*Of change there is no fear in that bright world above!*



There still remained a few months during which it was given us to assist at the holy Sacrifice offered daily and so devoutly by the venerated invalid, till at length his feebleness no longer permitted him to leave his room. What a consolation was it not for his spiritual daughters to wait upon their incomparable Father to the last, and to prove not only that an Ursuline can readily become a Sister of Charity when the occasion requires it, but that in consecrated hearts there is a depth of sympathy, tenderness and gratitude mingled with reverence which cannot be surpassed by mere human ties and affections.

On the 10th of January, 1890, there were symptoms of the near approach of the end. Prepared by the reception of the last sacraments, the venerable patient still lingered till the 22nd, when the silver chords of life were loosed all gently, and the freed soul took its flight, upward and secure, to the bosom of God, that God alone loved and served from earliest youth.

Of the following hours what can be told? Who has not experienced that feeling of desolation with which one turns away from that silent room where death has passed? Too soon the sad preparations are made. The late pleasant apartment is gloomy and vacant. Beneath it, to the right of the portico, the Convent parlor has been transformed to a mortuary chapel. There the dear remains, robed in priestly vestments, lay on a temporary catafalque, while nuns within the grating and friends from without, successively enjoyed the sad privilege of watching and praying in the presence of their friend, who seemed reposing in sleep rather than cold and still in death.

On the day appointed for the burial, the sanctuary and the nave of the chapel being draped in mourning and the altar with its black antependium, relieved by the symbolic white cross, the casket was removed thither, and the Requiem High Mass

was celebrated by a brother-chaplain <sup>1</sup>, Reverend A. Godbout, in presence of a large concourse of priests, the nuns in the interior chapel plaintively chanting in response the parts assigned to the choir.

Here, when mass was over, the beautiful funeral service of the ritual was performed, the trustful "*In paradisum*," the soul-inspiring "*Benedictus Dominus Deus Israël*," chanted by the priests and nuns, all gathering around the grave prepared beneath the sanctuary, the casket was lowered to its last resting-place, just near the holy altar, where the daily sacrifice is never offered without a memento from the grateful hearts of all the Sisterhood, for the eternal repose of their two venerated chaplains, Father Thomas Maguire and Father George Louis Lemoine.

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## CHAPTER XXI

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### BETHANY IN THE URSULINE CONVENT

There was a Bethany in Judæa, as our readers well remember, where dwelt a family particularly beloved of our Lord. The sisters Mary Magdalen and Martha were often favored by His visits, and on these occasions each entertained Him according to the instincts of a heart entirely devoted to His service. Mary, in a spirit of piety, would sit at His feet, listening to His words, perhaps to transmit them to those

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<sup>1</sup>—Another funeral at the basilica, that of Mgr Legaré, V. G., prevented His Eminence Cardinal Taschereau from bestowing upon our deceased chaplain that last token of his friendship and esteem.

over whom she might have influence ; Martha would minister to His wants, and diligently employed herself in preparing a repast for her Guest and for the family.

The different tastes and occupations of the two sisters who loved our Lord so sincerely and lived together so amicably, have been taken as a type of the two orders in our religious families, the choir and the lay-Sisters, both equally consecrated to the service of God by their holy vows, but serving Him in different avocations. The Ursuline choir-sister will have the privilege of chanting the Divine Office; she may remain longer at the feet of Jesus, whose teachings she is to transmit to her youthful charge. The lay-sister has to provide for the daily wants of the household, both nuns and pupils. She will perhaps, at times, like Martha of Bethany, "be troubled about many things"; but she knows that "one thing is necessary", and that is, to labor in the spirit of peace, seeking in all she does to please God.

The services she renders are as necessary to the prosperity of the institution as are those performed in the school-room by the choir-sister. Her vows are as sacred, and her title of "Spouse of Christ" as authentic and glorious. Martha is Mary's sister, and the relationship is marked by feelings of reciprocal esteem and affection, each depending upon the other and contributing by mutual services to their mutual happiness.

The lay-sister has her duties and her privileges, defined by the rule and enjoyed with all the security of a right. She has her hours of prayer and of recreation : she has even a share in the Divine Office by the recitation of her rosary, arranged to correspond to the divisions of Vespers, Matins, &c. When, after the mid-day recreation, there is reading for a quarter of an hour, the lay-sister is there with her mending or knitting, refreshing her mind while resting from more

active employments. When she has prepared the repast, she will be served at table by a choir-sister, another of whom will read aloud some edifying page ; and thus the day will pass, the two orders mingling to form one harmonious whole, the family of our Lord.

Our pupils, the boarders especially, learn to value and love the lay-sisters on whom they bestow the familiar title of *ma tante*. They retain a life-long grateful remembrance of the aid-infirmarian, if ever they have had an occasion to experience her tender care and extreme kindness. The younger pupils especially have a great regard for the sister who has care of their linen ; her appearance in the corridor with their clothes-bag or a parcel sent in from home, is certain to be the signal of delightful haste to meet the smiling messenger. Who, even among the older pupils, will ever forget the vigilant guardians of the dormitory, whose sleep was never so profound as not to be dispelled by the first whispered call, *Ma tante* ? If the trouble was a tooth-ache, an ear-ache, or even a mere fit of sleeplessness, how quickly was the good sister at the bedside of the complaining one, her kindness being often as efficacious as the best remedies of her medicine-box ! The lay-sisters appointed to the care of the apartments occupied by the pupils, their dormitories, class-rooms, etc., or to wait upon table during meals, are remembered by name, and past pupils, after years of absence, will send kind messages and make inquiries after their favorites. The other Sisters, not employed among the pupils, are not always known by their religious name, but by some other designation, as, the "*sœur qui prie toujours*", i. e. " she who is always praying " or *celle qui rit toujours*, i. e. " who is always smiling," or " who is so good " etc. Thus were known Sisters St. Amable, Ste. Candide, Ste. Prudentienne, Ste. Thècle and others.

Three among our lay-sisters of the last half-century had attained the measure of the golden jubilee. The first, Sister Leclerc of St. Alexis, professed in 1803, died in 1859, at the age of seventy-five. Laborious and capable of rendering service in many ways, she was especially skilful in the use of a carpenter's tools, and in the early part of the century saved the house many a shilling by handling the plane, the saw and the chisel in the manufacture of various articles, such as benches, tables, and even a teacher's rostrum, which has only lately given place to one more expensive, but not more convenient.

The second jubilarian was Sœur Couture de St. Denis, professed in 1812, deceased in 1864, at the age of seventy-four. For many years the garden was under her care, and in those days plums were plentiful as well as currants, angelica and vegetables generally. Flowers also were cultivated with the success of an experienced florist. During the winter months, the late gardener made shoes for the sisterhood.

The third jubilarian, Sœur Ratté de Ste. Geneviève, professed in 1822, lived to her eightieth year, dying in 1879. The good sister may have been known among the pupils as *la tante qui rit toujours*, so pleasant was her countenance and so obliging her disposition. A specialist she had been in pastry cooking. "Such cakes! such macarons!" so all the little girls of the minim department declared; and the older ones agreed with them.

As a body, our lay-sisters possess admirably the spirit of their state. They appreciate its privileges, they love its duties, their only ambition being to accomplish in the best manner possible the various tasks that are assigned them. The greatest fault they are apt to commit is over-work, now carrying a burden that is above their strength, now lifting a weight alone, when aid would have been required.

They love to find an opportunity to exercise an act of charity, and this without being noticed. On Sundays and holydays their delight is to spend long hours in the chapel. It is the house of their good Master, for whom they have toiled all the week. Now they will have *a good time*, praying for all their friends, for the conversion of sinners, for the Holy Father and other intentions without number. One Sister goes round the stations twice at least every Sunday. Another spends less time in the chapel; she has another sort of devotion: it is to help in the infirmary, the kitchen or in any office where there is work to be done on Sundays. Or perhaps there is some helpless one, a sister who is aged or infirm. In such cases there is ever a devoted sister, whose special duty and pleasure it seems to be to constitute herself her nurse; and what a tender and watchful guardian she proves! The sickness may be long, but the nurse never tires, and when her charge is over, and the room is vacant, how sad it is, how sincerely she regrets the dear Sister's departure! It was such a comfort to wait upon her!

And let no one think that the writer is describing here an ideal sisterhood, such as does not exist. No, she has only collected her own observations and the daily remarks she has heard from others. "How good, how respectful these sisters are! How hard-working, how agreeable they must be to God! They do not spare themselves. They are happy to win heaven so easily, etc."—"Oh! it is a good and pleasant thing for brethren or sisters to dwell together in unity." If indeed "Mary has chosen the better part," Martha is happy to abide with her, and she has often repeated in her heart the words of a lay-sister on her death-bed: "I would never have exchanged my place as a lay-sister in an Ursuline convent for that of a queen in her royal palace."

## CHAPTER XXII

THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDATION  
OF THE MONASTERY

## CONCLUSION

Our readers have seen how the 200th anniversary of the foundation of the Monastery was celebrated ; it is the subject of one of the last chapters of the "Glimpses." That of the 250th year was not dissimilar in its festivities, which commencing on July 30th, lasted three days.

Among the pleasing features of the day, one of the most memorable was the Papal Benediction obtained for us by the fatherly care of His Eminence Cardinal Taschereau, who had addressed the Holy Father a letter, a copy of which, as well as the answer from Rome, is preserved in our archives. With the usual forms the letter states that : "On the first of August of this present year of our Lord, 1889, the religious of the Ursuline Monastery of Quebec will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the arrival of their foundress, Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation with the companions of her toils.

"Since 1639, the members of this community have not ceased to devote themselves to the instruction of young girls with indefatigable zeal and entire success. Since its foundation the monastery has constantly contributed to the education of the faithful by its truly religious spirit and its strict regularity."

The Cardinal then solicits a plenary indulgence for all the faithful who, having fulfilled the usual conditions, shall visit the church of the Ursulines and pray for the intentions of

the Holy Father on one of the days of the triduum. He "sollicits the Apostolic Benediction for the Ursulines of Quebec as well as for the three houses of their order which they have founded; also for their pupils present, past and future, that mothers and daughters may rejoice together and give glory to God."

The answer from Rome concluded as follows: "Finally His Holiness bestows with the utmost cordiality His Benediction upon all the members of the Ursuline Community and their pupils.

(Signed) Archbishop of Tyre, Secretary of the  
Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith."

The musical part of the celebration during the three days was enhanced by the presence of an orchestra under the artistic training of Mr. Ernest Gagnon, a friend of the community whose obliging concurrence has on more than one occasion been kindly offered and gratefully accepted.

The decorations of the chapel, with lights and flowers in profusion, were less elaborate than those of 1839; such was the testimony of some who had witnessed the splendors of the bi-centennial.

A glance over the long list of nuns whose names follow that of Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation since 1639, shows us that at each fiftieth year there were some who had witnessed the preceding celebration or the commencement of the period. If in 1689, the three who had arrived in 1639 were all deceased, there was still one who had joined them the following year, 1640, and who was certainly a strong link with the past, as she had lived a year with the foundresses in that little convent on the wharf, sharing the hardships as well as the joys of the commencement.



At the Hundredth anniversary, 1739, there were five Mothers living who had spent the half-century in the Monastery, as we have mentioned at that date. And now, in 1889, there were also five who had taken part in the rejoicings of the second centennial <sup>1</sup>.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS. LISTS

At the close of this half-century, some remarks on the present state of education in the Convent might be expected.

Nor can we refrain from mentioning again, on the same subject, the immense obligations of the community to our ecclesiastical Superiors, the Bishops of Quebec.

If, in the course of the preceding pages, the paternal solicitude of the chief Pastor of the diocese for all the inmates of the Monastery has appeared on every occasion that regarded their welfare, temporal or spiritual; what shall we say of their judicious and enlightened zeal, as exerted to promote the principal object of the institution, the education of young girls, that education which is never to lose sight of its double object, by preparing useful members of society and heirs of the kingdom of heaven ?

The list of our obligations would be long, while the names of Bishops and Archbishops to whom the community owes a special meed of gratitude would succeed each other only to inscribe with ever increasing admiration the name of His Grace the Most Reverend Louis Nazaire Begin, Arch-

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1.—These were Mother Jeanne Létourneau of St. Paul, professed in 1830, deceased in 1893; Mother Louise Aylwin of St. Philip, professed in 1882, deceased in 1892; Mother Joséphine Michaud of Ste. Cécile, professed in 1835, deceased in 1890; Mother Kate Murphy-Kelly of Ste. Philomena, professed in 1839, deceased in 1890; Mother —a white-veiled novice in 1838.

bishop of Cyrene and the present administrator of the diocese, whose zeal for the promotion of education is proportionate to his life-time efforts and labors in that great and holy Cause.

In perfect accordance with the recent letter of the Holy Father on Catholic education, "religion is not only taught" to our pupils "at certain hours, but all the rest of the instruction exhales, as it were, a fragrance of Christian piety. The imparting of the various branches of human knowledge is associated with the culture of the soul."

The Normal School department, organized in 1857, has thus far proved most satisfactory. Not only has it during these forty years been fruitful in religious vocations, but hundreds of teachers among the eighteen hundred pupils graduated from the school, have merited praise in accomplishing the work for which it was instituted, that of teaching in the parishes throughout Canada. In this work, the community considers the pupils of the Normal school as their special auxiliaries. They are uncloistered Ursulines, who are commissioned to disseminate throughout the country those principles of piety and good morals, those habits of order, neatness and good manners which have been inculcated to them so carefully by the nuns charged with their formation.

It is particularly in the department of the Normal School that the Sodality of the Children of Mary enrolls its numerous clients. Among them, also, the Arch-confraternity of St. Angela is in great honor. They love to claim the virgin of Brescia as the patroness of their future labors. Happy is that young girl who goes forth from the Normal School with her well-earned diploma, if with her book-learning she has acquired "the higher lore that sanctifies." Then is she truly prepared for the important task that awaits her, and within her sphere, her influence will not fail to be salutary.

As teaching is the first duty of an Ursuline, after that of her own sanctification, it is ever the aim of the Superiors of the community to provide for the class-rooms, well qualified teachers as well as to supply the school with books and apparatus, school-furniture, etc. In short, they are solicitous to keep pace with the progress of the times and to meet the expectations of parents to whatever rank of society they may belong.

For advice and aid in bringing up to the standard of the times the course of studies in the department of the boarders and half-boarders, we have already mentioned our deep obligations to some distinguished members of the Seminary of Quebec, as well as to our two venerated chaplains now deceased, Father Thomas Maguire and Father G. L. Lemoine.

In the latter, we had lost, in 1889, a faithful and devoted friend; but the watchful care of Divine Providence would not abandon a community so grateful for past favors. Our recent loss has been remarkably compensated by the successive nomination of two members of the clergy eminently qualified for the important position, the Reverend Louis Paradis, our chaplain during five years, succeeded in 1895 by the Reverend Lionel St. G. Lindsay.

It will be a grateful task at a future day for one of the sisterhood, to recount all that was undertaken and accomplished by these excellent directors, whether in laying the foundations of a solid piety and forming the character of the pupils, or in exciting their emulation and contributing to their advancement in their studies. But let us not trespass upon these future pages further than to bless the Hand of God, who directs so graciously all things that they "work together for good" in favor of the daughters of Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation and their youthful charge.

But an event of touching interest for the Ursulines of Quebec has yet to be mentioned, and our readers naturally expect to be told what are now the prospects of a speedy accomplishment of our wishes and theirs.

The process for the beatification and canonization of the Venerable Foundress of the Monastery of Quebec, instituted with all the required formalities in 1867, under the authority of His Eminence Cardinal Taschereau, Archbishop of Quebec, has been transferred to Rome, where the several Commissions previously held have been declared valid.

As thirty years have now elapsed since they were commenced, as all the steps taken have only served to confirm the reputation of sanctity which has ever surrounded her name, and which, in 1874, won her, by the decision of the Court of Rome, the title of Venerable, our hopes of a favorable issue point to a day not far distant. The documents collected so solemnly to prove her heroic virtues are there in Rome; the Holy Father himself is interested in the cause, and in due time the decree will go forth authorizing the name of Marie Guyart de l'Incarnation to be publicly invoked as "Blessed Mother Mary of the Incarnation", or better, "Saint Mary of the Incarnation." Such is our prayer, such is our steadfast hope, as it is of the twelve thousand Ursulines throughout the world, all of whom, we believe, know the history and invoke the aid of our

VENERABLE MOTHER MARIE DE L'INCARNATION.

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## SUPERIORS SINCE 1839 AND COMMUNITY IN 1897

23. Mother Adélaïde Plante of St. Gabriel; Superior from 1836 to 1842; 1848 to 1854; 1857 to 1863; 1866 to 1872.
24. Mother Isabella McDonell of St. Andrew; from 1842 to 1848; 1854 to 1857; 1863 to 1866, deceased 1866.
25. Mother Adèle Cimon of St. Mary; from 1872 to 1875.
26. Mother Georgiana Van Felson of St. George; from 1875 to 1878; 1884 to 1890.
27. Mother Elizabeth Tims of St. Catherine; from 1878 to 1884.
28. Mother Georgiana Létourneau of Mary of the Assumption; from 1890 to 1896.
29. Mother Flavie Gagnon of Ste. Antoinette, 1896.

## PROFESSED CHOIR-NUNS, 1897.

## Professed in

Mothers Josephine Holmes of Ste. Croix.....	1840
Christine Delorme of St. Charles.....	1846
Catherine Gosselin of Ste. Claire.....	1848
Marie Louise Proulx of Ste. Julie.....	1850
Catherine Doherty of St. Christine.....	1857
Flavie Gagnon of Ste. Antoinette.....	1860
Luce Couture of M. de la Visitation.....	1861
Marie Osithée Faucher of Ste. Hélène.....	1866
Reine Girouard of Ste. Gertrude.....	1867
Antoinette Routier of Ste. Cordule.....	1867
Emma Nault of St. Joseph.....	1868
Emma Cimon of St. Jean Baptiste.....	1868
Adine Angers of Ste. Marie Madeleine.....	1869
Clémentine de la Chevrotière of St. Marc.....	1869
Georgina Létourneau of M. de l'Assomption.....	1869
Célanire Gosselin of Ste. Pélagie.....	1870
Eveline Blanchet of St. Michel.....	1871
Stella Murray of St. Edward.....	1872
Henriette Audette of M. de la Providence.....	1874
Paméla Roy of St. Louis.....	1874
Emma Chaperon of Ste. Aurélie.....	1876

	Professed in
7	
1836 to	<b>Mothers</b> Alvine Sirois of Ste. Elizabeth..... 1877
to 1848 ;	Joséphine Chaffers of M. de l'Enfant-Jésus..... 1878
	Sara Chabot of Ste. Clotilde..... 1879
to 1878 ;	Marcelline Talbot of St. Félix..... 1881
1884.	Catherine Power of St Bartholomew..... 1882
n ; from	Bridget Coote of St. Ursula..... 1882
	Grace Nagle of St. Agnes..... 1882
	Margaret Lindsay of St. Agatha..... 1883
	Caroline Fréchette of St. Frs. Xavier..... 1884
	Marie Thibault of St. Cyrille..... 1885
	Eleonore Higgins of St. Paula..... 1885
	<b>Sisters</b> <sup>1</sup> Teresa Harrison of M. of the Rosary..... 1886
	Alice Riverin of St. Frs. de Borgia..... 1887
	Albertine Lachance of St. Thomas..... 1887
	Marie Leclerc of Ste. Jeanne de Chantal..... 1887
fessed in	Rose Williams of Mary of Calvary..... 1887
..... 1840	Albina Paré of M. de l'Annonciation..... 1887
..... 1846	Clarisse Hudon of St. Alphonse..... 1887
..... 1848	Joséphine Galerneau of St. Benoit..... 1888
..... 1850	Antoinette Routhier of Ste. Joséphine..... 1889
..... 1857	Marie Rouleau of M. du Précieux Sang..... 1889
..... 1860	Arabella Laliberté of Ste. Thérèse..... 1889
..... 1861	Alphonsine Dumas of St. Frs. d'Assise..... 1892
..... 1866	Alphonsine Galerneau of M. de la Purification..... 1892
..... 1867	Rosa Lapierre of Ste. Adélaïde..... 1893
..... 1867	Adélaïde Matte of M. du Sacré-Cœur..... 1894
..... 1868	Adélaïde Lachance of M. du Bon-Secours..... 1894
..... 1868	Joséphine Boily of St. Bonaventure..... 1894
..... 1869	Eva Raymond of St. Athanase..... 1895
..... 1869	Elizabeth Colfer of St. Cecilia..... 1895
..... 1869	Wilhelmine Pelletier of St. Augustin..... 1896
..... 1870	Marie Lse O'Sullivan of St. John..... 1896
..... 1871	Adèle Taschereau of Ste. Monique..... 1897
..... 1872	Célanire Pelletier of Ste. Catherine..... 1897
..... 1874	
..... 1874	
..... 1876	

<sup>1</sup>—Choir nuns, less than twelve years professed are usually designated as Sisters.

## LAY-SISTERS

	Professed in
Sisters Esther Turcot of Ste Véronique.....	1843
Olive Fortier of Ste. Rose.....	1849
Marie Desharnais of Ste. Apolline.....	1849
Marie Bédard of St. François.....	1854
Philomène Sédileau of St. Bernard.....	1862
Auréli Bouillé of St. Hyacinthe.....	1863
Marie Fournier of St. Clément.....	1864
Mathilde Bergeron of Ste. Thècle.....	1866
Elmire Naud of St. Denis.....	1867
Caroline Turgeon of Ste. Marthe.....	1871
Marie Paradis of St. Roch.....	1874
Philomène Marcoux of St. Joachim.....	1875
Arthemise Harvey of St. Régis.....	1885
Célina Tremblay of St. Nicolas.....	1885
Honorine Cloutier of St. Amable.....	1887
Georgiana Martel of Ste. Geneviève.....	1888
Séraphine Dorion of St. Alexis.....	1893
Angéline Dionne of Ste. Marguerite.....	1894
Eugénie Paradis of St. Vincent de Paul.....	1894
Emma Huot of St. Mathieu.....	1895
Agnus Groleau of St. Grégoire.....	1896
Marie Anne Huot of St. Laurent.....	1897

Total, not including Sisters aiding in our newly-founded Convents, 77 professed nuns.

## LAUS CHRISTI.

## ERRATA

- Page 2 for " 1874 " read 1872.  
 " 12 for " 1862 " read 1855.  
 " 23 for " 1830 " read 1850.  
 " 38 for " austerily " read austerity.  
 " 45 for " reserve " read rescue.  
 " 97 and following headings for " visitors, " read visitors.  
 " 104 for " 1874 " read 1872.

Professed in

..... 1843  
..... 1849  
..... 1849  
..... 1854  
..... 1862  
..... 1863  
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..... 1866  
..... 1867  
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..... 1874  
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..... 1894  
..... 1894  
..... 1895  
..... 1896  
..... 1897

Founded Con-

read visitors.